



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

“Analysis of the Legal Relations of the European Union and the
Republic of Armenia”

verfasst von / submitted by
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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Laws (LL.M.)

Wien, 2024/ Vienna, 2024

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme code as it appears
on the student record sheet:

UA 999 082

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the
student record sheet:

Europäisches und Internationales
Wirtschaftsrecht /
European and International Business Law

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ. Prof. iR. Dr. hc. Peter Fischer

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ABSTRACT

Following Armenia's restoration of independence in 1991, substantial developments took place in the scope of its relationship with the European Union. The process itself was full of major obstacles and issues, the trend toward deepening of the relations was fluctuant, despite this the political will of the Parties made it possible to progress to significant achievements. Despite of the fact of Armenia being bonded politically and economically with Russia and Moscow-dominated economic and military organizations, Armenia and the EU have managed to develop and maintain cordial relations. Recent developments in the South Caucasus region further offer prospects for deepening the partnership between Armenia and the EU. A notable achievement in the sphere of legal relationship between Armenia and the EU and its further evolution was the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2017. This agreement primarily focuses on enhancing cooperation between Armenia and the EU in the political, social, and economic spheres.

In this Master's Thesis a thorough examination will be performed on the dynamic process of developments in legal relations between Armenia and the EU in the last three decades with a specific focus on the CEPA agreement, particularly its structure, the scope of the sections covered by it and the aims of the Parties of the agreement in each of those sections. Afterwards, the potential ways for enhanced institutional cooperation and deeper integration of Armenia within the EU will be investigated.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nach der Wiederherstellung der Unabhängigkeit Armeniens im Jahr 1991 haben sich die Beziehungen des Landes zur Europäischen Union erheblich weiterentwickelt. Der Prozess selbst war mit großen Hindernissen und Problemen behaftet, die Tendenz zur Vertiefung der Beziehungen war schwankend, dennoch ermöglichte der politische Wille der Parteien, bedeutende Fortschritte zu erzielen. Trotz der Tatsache, dass Armenien politisch und wirtschaftlich mit Russland und den von Moskau dominierten wirtschaftlichen und militärischen Organisationen verbunden ist, ist es Armenien und der EU gelungen, freundschaftliche Beziehungen zu entwickeln und aufrechtzuerhalten. Die jüngsten Entwicklungen in der Südkaukasusregion bieten weitere Aussichten für eine Vertiefung der Partnerschaft zwischen Armenien und der EU. Eine bemerkenswerte Errungenschaft im Bereich der rechtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Armenien und der EU und ihrer weiteren Entwicklung war die Unterzeichnung des Umfassenden und Erweiterten Partnerschaftsabkommens (CEPA) im Jahr 2017. Dieses Abkommen zielt in erster Linie auf eine verstärkte Zusammenarbeit zwischen Armenien und der EU in den Bereichen Politik, Soziales und Wirtschaft ab.

In dieser Masterarbeit wird der dynamische Prozess der Entwicklung der Rechtsbeziehungen zwischen Armenien und der EU in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten eingehend untersucht, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf dem CEPA-Abkommen liegt, insbesondere auf seiner Struktur, dem Umfang der von ihm erfassten Bereiche und den Zielen der Vertragsparteien in jedem dieser Bereiche. Anschließend wird untersucht, welche Möglichkeiten für eine verstärkte institutionelle Zusammenarbeit und eine tiefere Integration Armeniens in die EU bestehen.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA:	European Union Association Agreement
CEPA:	Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement
CIS:	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSDP:	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSTO:	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DCFTA:	EU-Armenia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EAEU:	Eurasian Economic Union
EaP:	Eastern Partnership
EC:	European Commission
EEAS:	European External Action Service
ENP:	European Neighborhood Policy
EP:	European Parliament
ECSC:	European Coal and Steel Community
EU:	European Union
FTA:	Free trade Agreement
GATS:	General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization
GSP:	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
ICC:	International Criminal Court
IPR:	Intellectual Property Rights
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE:	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA:	EU–Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SPS:	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TACIS:	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TBT:	Technical Barriers to Trade
TEU:	Treaty on European Union
TRIPS:	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UK:	The United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
WTO:	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the Topic

The 2024 turns out to be a turning point in Armenia's relations with the EU, On March 12, 2024, the European Parliament approved a resolution stating that Armenia meets the requirements set forth in Article 49 of the TEU, thus granting the country the opportunity to seek EU membership in the future¹. Another peculiar development in Armenia - EU relations that is worth mentioning Is that on March 27 a report titled "Deepening EU - Armenia Relations: More Europe in Armenia; More Armenia in Europe" was drafted by the Friends of Armenia Network, a high-level political group established in 2023 by the former Danish Prime Minister and NATO General Secretary Anders Fogh Rasmussen aimed at promoting support for democratic Armenia and aiding the peace process in the South Caucasus². The Friends of Armenia Network consists of former prime ministers, parliamentarians, and diplomats, and seeks to strengthen Armenia's ties with democracies in Europe and in the world that share same democratic values.³

The report includes statements and recommendations on the issue of Armenia's EU candidacy potential structured in sections mainly centered on the areas of security cooperation, border management, strengthening Armenia's resilience and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Ultimately the report that the EU has a historic chance to support Armenia's shift towards the West. This opportunity, which offers significant benefits at a low cost, could transform the South Caucasus. It would strengthen Armenia's democracy and stabilize both the country and the region. The EU has a strong interest in making Armenia more resilient, less dependent on Russia, and less threatened by Azerbaijan. There is a lot more the EU and its member

¹ European Parliament Joint motion for a resolution - RC-B9-0163/2024 on closer ties between the EU and Armenia and the need for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia

12.3.2024 - (2024/2580(RSP)) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2024-0163_EN.html

² FAN- Deepening EU-Armenia Relations: More Europe in Armenia; More Armenia in Europe chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://rasmussenglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FAN-Report-Deepening-EU-Armenia-relations.pdf>

³ Anders Fogh Rasmussen launches high-level group to support democratic Armenia.

<https://rasmussenglobal.com/anders-fogh-rasmussen-launches-high-level-group-to-support-democratic-armenia/>

states can do. This should be a long-term, meaningful, and strategic commitment to supporting a democratic Armenia.⁴

The prospect of complete European integration for Armenia remains a very complicated issue, nevertheless nowadays the relationship between Armenia and EU is emerging as one of main political discourses in the Armenian society, the interest in rethinking these relations as a whole, continuous process is growing significantly, however the topic remains academically poorly researched, mainly because of lack of general, structured publications on the issue that will encompass the relationship as a whole and dynamic process.

The geopolitical atmosphere of South Caucasus opens new opportunities for deepening and further developing the relationship between Armenia and the EU, the establishment of the European Union Mission in Armenia in January 2023 with the objective to contribute to stability in the border areas of Armenia confidence on the ground, by carrying out active patrolling and reporting, and supporting normalization efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the inclination of Armenian government towards working on step by step normalization of relations with neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan after the long lasted conflict, gradual process of reshaping Russia's role on influencing the region and granting Georgia EU candidacy status in December 2023.^{[5][6]} These are amongst the important changes that shape the regional politics of the day, thus the relevance of the issue of Armenia - EU relations should not be overestimated.

Taking all before mentioned into account, the motivation of writing this Master's Thesis is to contribute to the topic of this work by encouraging the steadily growing interest in the issues that gained significancy in Armenian legal sphere and society in general and has a potential of playing a crucial role in the country's future by shedding light on the legal aspects of the Armenia – EU relations.

⁴ FAN- Deepening EU-Armenia Relations: More Europe in Armenia; More Armenia in Europe chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://rasmussenglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FAN-Report-Deepening-EU-Armenia-relations.pdf>

⁵ EU Mission in Armenia, An official website of the European Union https://www.eeas.europa.eu/euma_en?s=410283

⁶ European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) Georgia https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en#:~:text=On%2014%20December%202023%2C%20Georgia,8%20November%202023%20are%20taken.

1.2. Methodology

This Master's Thesis is aimed at shedding light to the developments that occurred in the scope of the legal relationship between Armenia and the EU, its current state and the possibilities of future by the method of analyzing the most important points of its evolution and the main legal act that is essentially the framework of the relationship, the CEPA of 2017. The work is structured into four chapters where the background, past developments, the CEPA are described followed by the made conclusions.

The main methodological conclusions are based on primary and secondary sources of information. Taking into account the existing primary research conducted by various institutions and individuals, I incorporated their findings into my analysis after thoroughly reviewing and utilizing their results. The secondary information that is used includes books, articles, newspaper articles, reports, and other sources. By thoroughly analyzing this previous research, a personal perspective was developed on the topic of this Master's Thesis. This method ultimately made it possible to critically evaluate the hypothesis of this work and explain its validity.

1.3. Historic Overview

Armenia is a landlocked country located in the region of South Caucasus, opinions on whether the South Caucasus is part of Europe in its sense or not are different, though the most accepted argument is that, although the region itself is geographically situated mostly in Western Asia, the region, in sense of political reality, should be considered to be part of geopolitical Europe, moreover, Armenian society and culture share their core values and worldviews with Europe and have been connected with it through span of ages.

The relationship between Armenian people and Europe in its most broad meaning can be traced back to the times of classical antiquity. The first contacts as such between the ancestors of today's Europeans and the ones of the Armenians occurred in the times of the rise of ancient Greek civilization. One of the first documented contacts between the ancient Greeks and Armenians was documented in the *Anabasis* the work of Greek philosopher and military leader Xenophon who marched through ancient Armenia around 401 B.C. while returning to Greece after his campaign as a mercenary leader in Iranian Achaemenid Empire where a power struggle was taking place. In his

work Xenophon described the land and the people of Armenia and made numerous peculiar comments on the life and customs of the people he met.⁷ After the conquests of Alexander the Great in fourth century B.C. Armenia, even though mostly not directly conquered by Greco - Macedonians, fell under heavy influence of Hellenistic culture which was predominant in the whole Mediterranean region after Alexander's campaigns.⁸

Hellenism itself was a phenomenon of Greek culture being mixed with local, in this case, ancient Armenian traditions and culture. Starting from fourth century B.C. for around six centuries Armenia remained a state with Hellenistic religion and nobility and even after the adoption of Christianity as the official state religion of the Kingdom of Armenia in the year 301, the first state to do so even before Constantinople and Rome, the Hellenistic culture remained as one of fundamentals of Armenian culture in the later ages.⁹

Armenia had a dynamic and complex relationships with the Roman Empire, Armenia's geographic position played a fundamental role in those relations, being situated between Roman and Iranian Empires from the first century B.C., Armenia had to navigate its way through balancing between war and diplomacy and periodically falling under the influence of those empires, this trend of mixed relations continued until the retreat of late Roman - Byzantine Empire from the region¹⁰

Middle Ages became a period of more complex and deep connections between Armenia and Europe mostly on the grounds of both being part of the Christian world. From eleventh to fourteenth centuries during the age of Crusades the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia established by resettled Armenians on the shore of Mediterranean Sea, in many circumstances allied itself with the European Crusader States. Through connections with Europeans, Armenian merchants traded with European cities, Armenian culture was strongly influenced by the Europeans of the region in that period of time.¹¹ Moreover, Armenian and European nobility intermarried for the fulfillment of their strategic goals, thus, it resulted in that after the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in

⁷ A History of Armenia by Vahan M. Kurkjian Chapter IX

⁸ Simon Payaslian The History of Armenia from the Origins to the Present p.11

⁹ Margaryan H. Hellenistic culture in Armenia. Institute for Armenian Studies of YSU http://www.historyofarmenia-am.armin.am/en/Encyclopedia_of_armenian_history_hellenistakan_mshakuty

¹⁰ Simon Payaslian The History of Armenia from the Origins to the Present pp. 27-46.

¹¹ Ghazarian, Jacob G. (2000). The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia during the Crusades: The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins (1080–1393). Routledge. pp. 159–161. ISBN 0-7007-1418-9.

the fourteenth century, the title of the “King of Armenia” passed to the House of Savoy, the dynasty of Italian Kingdom which ruled the country till 1946, the family still maintaining the title.¹²

From the late Middle Ages on the period of significant presence of Armenian Diaspora in Europe begun. As Armenia was conquered by different invaders, many Armenians left for better life and many of them settled in European states. Large Armenian communities were established in Poland, Ukraine, Romania, and Italy, for instance the first Armenian book was printed in Venice in 1512, and the first Armenian Bible was printed in Amsterdam, 1666.¹³

After the Armenian Genocide of 1915 - 1923 the number of Armenians in Europe increased significantly, Armenian communities in France and Germany among others became hubs of Armenian refugees in Europe.¹⁴ Armenian Diaspora in France, with an estimated number of around 650,000 people emerged as one of the most significant Armenian communities outside of Armenia, gaining economic and political importance.¹⁵

After centuries of foreign rule, Armenia restored its independence, the Republic of Armenia was declared on 28th of May 1918, it was a parliamentary democracy with universal male - female suffrage.¹⁶ Though independence was short lived as in 1920 the republic was occupied by the Russian Red Army and later incorporated into the Soviet Union, during two and half years Armenia established diplomatic relations with numerous European states. In January of 1920, Armenia's independence was *de facto* recognized by the League of Nations and the Supreme Allied Council consisting of Britain, France, Italy, the United States, and Japan, and on August 10th *de jure* in the scope of the treaty of Sèvres signed between the Armenian representatives, Allied powers that

¹² Mauvillon, Eleazar (1742). The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy. London: James Hodges

¹³ The Pioneers of Armenian Printing, The Museum of Printing <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-pioneers-of-armenian-printing-the-museum-of-printing/cwXxZfaxQohNGg?hl=en>

¹⁴ Ember, Melvin; Ember, Carol R.; Skoggard, Ian (2004). Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World. Springer. pp. 36–43.

¹⁵ The Armenian Weekly All roads lead to Armenia <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/01/08/all-roads-lead-to-armenia/#:~:text=Today%2C%20around%20650%2C000%20members%20of,they%20perpetuate%20their%20unique%20heritage.>

¹⁶ Badalyan, Lena (5 December 2018). "Women's Suffrage: The Armenian Formula". Chai Khana. Retrieved 30 November 2018.

included among the others France, UK, Italy, Belgium, Greece, Poland etc. and the Ottoman Empire.^{[17][18]}

After the end of the Second World War Western Europe entered into a new age, the aim of the Western European leaders of that time was to create a political - economic system that will be based on mutual benefits and common interests of the European states therefore a new war will be unnecessary and unprofitable and long lasting peace will be ensured, this resulted in the creation of The European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 which was established by the Treaty of Paris between Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and West Germany. In 1957 the Treaty of Rome was signed, thus the European Economic Community, a European customs union was established. In the next three decades more European states joined the integrated European Community, and when the collapse of communism in Europe in 1989 occurred a new prospect for the European Community emerged.

In 1993 the Treaty of Maastricht was signed thus formally creating the European Union and setting the finalized criteria for potential members to join the EU, the 1990s saw among others the creation of the European Single Market with its four freedoms, the Schengen area of border free travel, the European Economic Area and the introduction of European currency the Euro. The treaties of Nice and Lisbon were signed in 2001 and 2007 respectively, further developing the EU and its institutions and 2000s and 2010s saw numerous of ex - communist Eastern European countries joining the EU and others gaining candidacy status.¹⁹ In 2009 the EU, and six Eastern European countries initiated the formation of the Eastern Partnership aimed at becoming a platform for regulating the social and economic relations of EU with ex - soviet countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.²⁰

Armenia regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 thus making it possible for the country to establish new connections and to develop its relationship with Europe.

¹⁷ Hovannisian, Richard G. (1982). The Republic of Armenia: From Versailles to London, 1919–1920. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 978-0520041868.

¹⁸ Hovannisian, Richard G. (1996b). The Republic of Armenia: Between Crescent and Sickle: Partition and Sovietization. Vol. 4. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 978-0520088047..

¹⁹ History of the EU, official website of the European Union https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en

²⁰ "Eastern Partnership - EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission". EEAS - European External Action Service. Retrieved 10 December 2018. Content is copied from this source, which is (c) European Union, 1995-2018. Reuse is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Chapter 2: Initialization and Association Agreement Attempt

2.1. Early Developments of the Armenia - EU Legal Relations

On 21st of September 1991 the Republic of Armenia formally regained its independence from the Soviet Union, in subsequent months the country was recognized by most of the UN member states and on 2nd of March 1992 Armenia was admitted into the organization, as a result, the newly established Armenia's Foreign Ministry commenced its functions, the process of transformation of Armenia's political and economic systems was also in full swing. The process of transition to democracy, including the transition from communist command economy to free market posed as a major challenge for the emerging state, Armenia underwent a period of energetic and humanitarian crisis in the early 90s, thus one of the main objectives of Armenia's foreign policy of the time was to establish cooperative and cordial relations with the main economies of the world.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in establishment of newly independent states most of which were initiating the process of transition to democracy and free - market economy, the situation made possible for the European Community to initiate the establishment of contacts with these states. In 1991 the European Economic Community launched the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program. TACIS's aim was to provide technical assistance on the basis of grant - financing of the ex - Soviet states including Armenia, thus become the first platform-instrument of Armenia - EU relations.²¹

For the ex - Soviet republics of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus the 1990s emerged as a period of significant rise in the interests of establishing closer with the EU as the countries were in desperate need of foreign assistance in the turbulent development they underwent, the EU on the other hand was also interested in providing the much needed aid and spreading its influence as it itself underwent the significant era of consolidation, this resulted in the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1996 between Armenia and ECSC that became

²¹ European Commission, What is TACIS? <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/4390-what-is-tacis>

effective in 1999, creating the first and main agreement between Armenia and EU that established a framework for the relationship of the Parties.²²

The PCA was aimed at promoting democracy and encouraging democratic reforms, encouraging and developing the liberalization of the free market economy, promoting the rule of law and human rights defense, the agreement also was encouraging Armenia to develop closer relations with the EU institutions and international economic organizations, increasing trade and investments, moreover the agreement was encouraging for establishment and maintaining peaceful relations between Armenia and its neighbors, a sensitive topic in which the EU was emerged as an intermediary, the PCA was effective till 2021 when it was expired.²³

Despite the progress of 1990s including the establishment of PCA, the agreement was mainly described by having basic technical characteristics and didn't stand out of general approach of the EU towards the ex - Soviet states as the overall foreign policy of the EU towards those state was more or less universal in that time period. Developing an encompassing strategic approach by the EU towards all former Soviet republics was shaped by various factors. For a considerable time, the EU lacked a deep and researched understanding of the region and maintained a passive role as a political supranational entity despite some of the member states being engaged more actively. This trend persisted throughout the 1990s, mainly as the EU was undergoing continuous transformation, which impeded its ability to effectively address the needs of the newly emerged ex - Soviet republics.

However, with the EU's eastward expansion, its perspective on the region, and Armenia in particular, began to change significantly as geopolitical realities evolved to suit the effort.²⁴ After the significant EU enlargement of 2004, when 10 new states were accepted into the union making in the largest enlargement so far, the EU was aimed at further developing the relations with its direct neighbors, thus the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was created. The ENP is an EU foreign policy framework aimed at creating deeper relationships between the EU and its Eastern and Southern neighboring countries, with a focus on mutual benefit and shared interests, human

²² Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part - Protocol on mutual assistance between authorities in customs matters - Final Act - Joint Declarations - Exchange of Letters in relation to the establishment of companies - Declaration of the French Government Official Journal L 239 , 09/09/1999 P. 0003 – 0050 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A21999A0909%2801%29>

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Zhuchkova Yulia V. EU–ARMENIA: ALL IS NOT LOST? Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia). 2017

rights, democracy, and rule of law, and also prioritizing economic development, security and mobility of migration.²⁵ Armenia became a member of ENP, a development which corresponded to the goals of Armenia's foreign policy of the time. In 2006 the ENP adopted an Armenia Action Plan that would be monitored and implemented by the sub – committee established by the EU – Armenia PCA of 1996.²⁶

Recognizing the limitations of the ENP framework, Brussels promptly understood that uniform strategy would not be sufficient for deeper development and cooperation in strictly different states of the ENP encompassing the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Middle East, and North Africa. These countries possessed distinct interests, goals, and perspectives on cooperation and integration with the EU. This realization prompted the EU to seek alternative approaches for integrating ex - Soviet states. In 2009 as a result, to strengthen stability, security, and prosperity for both the EU and its partners, the EU launched the Eastern Partnership (EaP) project, which brought together six ex - Soviet states. This initiative referred to Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in Eastern Europe and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the South Caucasus.²⁷

The main goal of the EaP is to establish a framework for the potential Association Agreements between the EU and its Eastern partners that will show substantial advancement in maintaining and implementation of the common values and principles. In addition to emphasizing common values, the EaP underlines the strategic significance of the region, stressing the EU's commitment to nurturing an increasingly cooperative relationship with its Eastern partners.²⁸ The approach of the EU and the Eastern partners formulate that the EaP policy puts a considerable aim on further development of the human rights and strengthening of the rule of law in the ex-Soviet states, considering these aspects as main and fundamental pillars of the EaP strategy.²⁹

Emphasizing the above - mentioned, EaP turned to be a highly beneficial initiative for its ex-Soviet member states as it became a platform for discussion of important topics of European integration

²⁵ EU External Action European Neighbourhood Policy https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en#:~:text=Under%20the%20ENP%2C%20the%20EU,toward%20approximation%20with%20EU%20standards.

²⁶ European Neighbourhood Policy – ARMENIA, 2008
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_08_204

²⁷ Zhuchkova Yulia V. EU–ARMENIA: ALL IS NOT LOST? Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia). 2017

²⁸ Values to form core of EU 'Eastern Partnership', EU Observer, 2009-03-18 <https://euobserver.com/24/27799>

²⁹ Karina SHYROKYKH (December 2017). "Effects and side effects of European Union assistance on the former Soviet republics" <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510347.2016.1204539>

for these states as among others visa liberalization for their citizens, increasing the strategic cooperation and establishing free trade agreements, while not stressing out the topic of potential EU accession of Eastern partners.

Since late 1990s to early 2010s Armenia also joined number of European regional initiatives such as the Council of Europe, the European Higher Education Area, The EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly, The European Cultural Convention, The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Ultimately, the logic of participation of Armenia in the EaP was driving the country towards the prospect of concluding an Association Agreement (AA) and establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).³⁰

2.2. Association Agreement Negotiations

One of the cornerstone strategic aims of the European Neighborhood Policy and the EaP in Armenia's case was the formulation of a legal basis for establishing further in depth and mutually beneficial relationships between the EU and the participating states, in the case of the EaP the tenable culmination of the dynamic developments of these relations may be the result of the EaP members joining the Union itself as the states had the potential of fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU accession, furthermore this issue being concerned and made more tangible in the eighth EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly of 2019 where in the resolution that was passed the prospects and strategies of the EU enlargement and European integration of the EaP states by 2030 was established.³¹ As accession to the EU is and has generally been seen as the logical and ultimate goal in the process of European integration for most of the EaP countries, the conclusion of Association Agreements with the EU has been seen as the first feasible step towards creating a basis for bringing the domestic legal systems of the EaP countries closer to the EU *acquis* in general

³⁰ European Council, Council of the European Union, Eastern Partnership
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/>

³¹ EPA Resolution on the future of the Trio Plus Strategy 2030: building a future of Eastern Partnership chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.epgncms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/439b3edc-e523-4a0e-a9bc-e6c8db51ed75/NEST_8th_urgency_resolution_EN.pdf

and towards fulfilling the reforms and standards necessary for the eventual start of the EU accession process.

European Union Association Agreement (AA) is a specific type of an international treaty concluded between the EU and its member states and non-EU countries having the goal of creating a legal fundament for a framework governing the relationship between the beforementioned Parties. Association Agreements are comprehensive framework agreements regulating the bilateral relations of the Union and the state concluding it. The EU generally negotiates these agreements in return for commitments to political, economic, trade, or human rights reforms in the participating state. In exchange, the concluding country may receive tariff-free access to some or all EU markets, including industrial goods and agricultural products, as well as financial or technical assistance for its development. In the last decades the Association Agreements often incorporate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the EU and the third country. These agreements are approved by the European Union and are ratified by all of the EU member states and the concluding non-EU country.

The Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community, included a provision for Association Agreements. According to the European External Action Service (EEAS), for an agreement to be classified as an Association Agreement, it must meet several criteria:³²

1. The legal basis for [association agreements'] conclusion is Article 217 TFEU (former art. 310 and art. 238 TEC)
2. Intention to establish close economic and political cooperation (more than simple cooperation);
3. Creation of paritary bodies for the management of the cooperation, competent to take decisions that bind the contracting Parties;
4. Offering most favoured nation treatment;
5. Providing for a privileged relationship between the EC and its partner;

³² European Union External Action Service 11/05/2011 Association Agreements chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/association/docs/agreements_en.pdf

6. Since 1995 the clause on the respect of human rights and democratic principles is systematically included and constitutes an essential element of the agreement;
7. In a large number of cases, the association agreement replaces a cooperation agreement thereby intensifying the relations between the partners.

In July of 2010 Armenia and the EU commenced the process of negotiations to conclude an Association Agreement that included a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement a standard form of a free trade agreement for the EaP states, different from the standard free trade areas, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) aims to offer the associated state the "four freedoms" of the EU Single Market which are the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people. However, the movement of people is limited to a visa-free regime for short-term travel which is achieved through completion of the EU visa liberalization process by the target state, while the movement of workers remains under the jurisdiction of the individual EU Member States.³³

The AA between Armenia and the EU was conceived in such a way as to create conditions under which Armenia would have become part of the single legal system of the EU, which would have allowed Armenia to receive obvious benefits, and at the same time assumed that EU institutions such as the European Parliament, the EU Commission and, most importantly, the European Court of Justice would be able to effectively implement the beneficial legal and organizational practices in the Armenian legal system.

Nevertheless the poor social and economic situation of Armenia facing corruption and semi-authoritarian political environment in early 2010s the country was more than interested and inclined towards developing and deepening its relationship with the EU, the many internal and external factors that led Armenian government of the time towards negotiating with the EU on concluding an AA and a DCFTA can be grouped under the umbrella of intention towards creating a counterweight that will create a balance in Armenia in the mid of ever growing economic and geopolitical influence of the Russian Federation.

³³ The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area What's it all about? https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/ukraine/documents/virtual_library/vademecum_en.pdf

In 1997 Armenia and Russian Federation signed the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.³⁴ The signing of the 1997 agreement effectively cemented the military alliance between Armenia and Russia and its conclusion was mainly pursuant towards Armenia's intention of securing foreign support in its conflict with Azerbaijan, and Russia seeking strengthening its military power in the region of South Caucasus, the two effectively became military allies, in addition, both countries are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), yet the obviously uneven resources of two countries and Armenia's problematic relations with its two immediate neighbors Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia's role in its relations with Russia emerged as of the client. Russia having active military personal in Armenia and having a rigid and dominant position in country's energetic sector due to Armenia being blockaded by Azerbaijan and Turkey and therefore depending on Russian gas supply e.g., the main gas supplying company in Armenia at the time and still being Gazprom Armenia CJSC a subsidiary of Russian majority state-owned PJSC Gazprom), created a need of diversification of the foreign relations of Armenia.

The strategy of deepening integration ties with the EU was also in Armenia's economic interest, as it contributed to diversifying the country's foreign economic activities. According to the National Statistical Office, as of 2008-2009, the trading balance sheet showed that EU imports and imports from CIS countries were almost identical, each totaling just over \$1 billion.³⁵

The launch of the negotiations sparked controversy among political figures and the academic community of all interested parties, including Russia. Russia promoted its integration model through the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) planned to be officially established in 2014.³⁶ Moscow, which had always been negatively aware of the EaP and its strategies, was concerned that concluding an Association Agreement would result in losing its former geopolitical influence in the post-Soviet countries due to the initiation of a process of coming closer to the EU *acquis* thus creating a foreign environment in traditionally Russian dominated geopolitical regions.

³⁴ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenia/Russia: Landmark Treaty Includes Provision For Mutual Defense <https://www.rferl.org/a/1086156.html>

³⁵ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Database of foreign trade of the Republic of Armenia. [Online] Available from: <http://www.armstat.am>.

³⁶ Overview of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) By THE INVESTOPEDIA TEAM Updated January 01, 2021 Reviewed by CHARLES POTTERS <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/eurasian-economic-union-eeu.asp#:~:text=On%20May%2029%2C%202014%2C%20the,1%2C%202015>.

Additionally, Russia feared it would no longer be a leading supplier of energy resources in the region, as the EU and its partners intended to develop alternative energy supply routes.

Russia was also concerned about losing traditional markets for its goods and services and that its internal market would be flooded with cheaper and higher-quality European goods re-exported through countries such as Armenia or Ukraine. This led Russia to take more decisive action against countries aiming to establish an AA and a free trade area with the EU. Armenia was, therefore among the EaP countries facing economic and political pressure from the Russian Federation. One of the pressure instruments of Moscow was, among others, the leverage of the “gas monopoly” it enjoyed in Armenia thus, in 2012, Russia raised the prices of supplied gas, which, amid an economic recession, significantly affected the country.³⁷

The thesis that existed in Armenian society of the time that Russia would tolerate the actively accelerating process of European integration in Armenia was proven wrong, Moscow through pressure on both economic and political fronts succeed in pushing Armenian government to abandon the mostly successful AA negotiations of three years and on 3 September 2013 the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan announced Armenia joining the newly envisioned Russian-dominated EAEU instead.

Theories differ whether Armenia was pressured or persuaded to eventually reject the AA in favor of joining the EAEU including the organization’s Customs Union. Nevertheless the position that prevails is that Armenia was absolutely not the initiator of this political shift and that it was a clear act of giving to the Russian pressure which reacted aggressively towards the approach of the EU in regard of bringing closer the EaP states towards it, as Russia begun to aggressively assert its vision on the geopolitical changes in the ex-Soviet states clearly having the idea of those countries being its sphere of political and economic influence. The Russian approach towards the ex-Soviet states attempting to engage in European integration can be clearly seen on the example of Ukraine from 2013 onwards.³⁸

Another open question on the agenda in Armenia was that, whether the decision of joining the EAEU answered to the problems of Armenian economy of the day, whether it would have been

³⁷ Zhuchkova Yulia V. EU–ARMENIA: ALL IS NOT LOST? Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia). 2017 p. 65

³⁸ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 pp. 1-3

beneficial for the country or if it was a substantial alternative of the AA including the DCFTA, as this decision dramatically shifted the countries organically developed economic and foreign trade mechanism and was even more not logical after three years of mostly successful AA negotiations with the EU.³⁹

In fact, even within the Armenian government at the time, the president's sudden shift was not universally welcomed. In the end, the government interpreted this unexpected action as a necessary step to maintain vital security ties with Russia, an explanation that was eventually accepted by the public and most political circles, while at the same time once again highlighting the country's heavy dependence on Russia in matters of major political decision-making and the asymmetrical nature of Armenia-Russia relations.

The EAEU and its Customs Union clearly lacked the benefits that an AA and DCFTA would have offered to Armenia, as it offered fewer benefits and participation in it would come with obstacles such as the lack of a common border with all other members or the structural differences of the Armenian economic system from the framework and logic of this economic union.⁴⁰

In conclusion the decision of Armenian government on joining the EAEU made the implementation of the DCFTA part of the envisioned Armenia AA effectively impossible, thereafter Armenia and the EU started to touch the issue of creating an alternative framework that will regulate Armenia-EU relations while omitting the components of an AA that will be contradicting to Armenia's obligations as a member of the EAEU.

Armenia's unexpected turn towards the EAEU instead of the EU, although being an extremely painful issue, the parties had and kept their political will of continuing the deepening of cooperation within the new geopolitical realities by using the available instruments of the moment.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Giragosian, Richard (2014) "Armenia's Strategic U-Turn", ECFR Policy Memo No. 99, European Council on Foreign Relations (www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR99_ARMENIA_MEMO_AW.pdf).

Chapter 3: The CEPA

3.1. Creating an Alternative to the Association Agreement

The decision of Armenian government to withdraw from signing the envisioned AA and DCFTA with EU was sudden and surprising. Nevertheless, the ultimate failure to conclude the Agreement there was understanding that the three years of rather successful negotiations should not be disregarded, this approach to the issue was mostly present on the Armenian part as the country would have been the main beneficiary if the potential AA was successful.

Thus, on 2nd October 2013 during the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan announced that Armenia was willing to sign a diverse version of the AA during the upcoming November EaP Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania that will not include the DCFTA part of the agreement as it would contradict Armenia's obligations as member of the EAEU.⁴¹

The EU did not accept the swift, one-sided proposal of Armenia and no AA or any document was signed at the summit in Vilnius. Nevertheless, the failure of concluding an AA didn't become a gravestone on the strategic issue of deepening Armenia-EU relations. Even though Brussels rejected the initial proposal of president Sargsyan on signing a lite version of the negotiated AA and its frustration on Armenia sharply turning away and joining the EAEU, the EU had the political will and understanding not to abandon its approach of integration towards Armenia as the strategy of the EU at the time aimed at approaching the EaP states in general stressed the importance of committing to maintaining and deepening bilateral cooperation regardless of the integrational aspirations of these states.⁴²

Thus, both parties were eventually eager to continue the dialogue while avoiding the rough edges that have emerged. For instance hints of a prospect of renewed negotiations appeared in

⁴¹ "President Sargsyan says Armenia to continue cooperation with EU", [ArmeniaNow.com](http://armenianow.com), 2 October 2013, archived from [the original](http://theoriginal) on 7 June 2015, retrieved 28 October 2013.
https://web.archive.org/web/20150607221336/http://armenianow.com/news/48880/armenia_president_serzh_sargsyan_strasbourg_pace_speech

⁴² Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009 chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf

December 2013, when the Polish ambassador to Armenia stated that the EU and Armenia were discussing a less comprehensive bilateral agreement on their relations and did "not rule out the possibility that it may be an association agreement in a different form".⁴³

Armenia and the EU eventually restarted the talks on achieving a conclusion of an alternative framework agreement in October of 2014 approximately a year after the failed original attempt and fading of the initiative in general. The so called "scoping exercise" aimed at identifying specific areas for inclusion in a new EU-Armenia agreement was successfully initiated. This new round of talks was grounded in the EU's respect for "Armenia's sovereign choice," offering the Armenian government a more diplomatic way to rebuild trust and confidence after the 2013 failure. As one EU official recalled:⁴⁴

*We establish a framework where the competences of the Eurasian Economic Union and the objectives of the EU do not clash. We want to respect Armenia's obligations to the Eurasian Economic Union but at the same time promote the EU objectives which includes trade.*⁴⁵

In January 2015, Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, stated that the EU was willing to sign a revised framework document based on the previously designed AA without the free trade provisions, therefore omitting the initiative of step by step integration into the EU Internal Market.⁴⁶ Finally the formal negotiations begun in December 2015.⁴⁷ The launch of the negotiations became possible after the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC, Commission) requested and received a mandate from the Council of the European Union (Council) to begin negotiations with Armenia after the conclusion of the beforementioned "scoping exercise".⁴⁸

⁴³ "EU, Armenia may sign modified association agreement, says Polish envoy". 2013-12-13. Archived from the original on 2014-01-07. Retrieved 2014-01-07.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140107214349/http://www.tert.am/en/news/2013/12/13/azatutyun/>

⁴⁴ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 4

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ "EU Commissioner Opens Door To Armenian Association Agreement". Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. 2015-01-20. Retrieved 2015-02-09. <https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-armenia-association-agreement-hahn/26804512.html>

⁴⁷ "EU and Armenia to start negotiations for a new agreement". European External Action Service. 2015-12-07. Retrieved 2016-01-03

http://collections.internetmemory.org/haeu/content/20160313172652/http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/071215_eu-armenia_agreement_negotiations_en.htm

⁴⁸ Danileyan, Emil, "EU, Armenia Open Talks on 'Comprehensive' Accord", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Armenian Service, 8 December 2015 (www.azatutyun.am/a/27412677.html).

The resumption of negotiations on a new Agreement between Armenia and the European Union fit both the logic of the principle of differentiation, which was declared at the Prague Summit of the EaP and confirmed once again at the Riga Summit in 2015, and the EU Global Strategy adopted in 2016.^{[49][50][51]} Once more confirmed, Yerevan, which has been trying to build its international relations in the spirit of differentiation for many years, was not going to give up attempts to develop a dialogue with the EU. The resumption of the negotiations on the revision of the framework Agreement for the partnership between the EU and Armenia was the result of commitment to such approaches by both sides.⁵²

On 27 February 2017, the EU and Armenia finalized the negotiations of a new agreement to deepen their political and economic ties on a meeting of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and the European Council President Donald Tusk and other high-ranking officials in Brussels. Despite not being a “standard” Association Agreement and not including the DCFTA, the newly designed Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement fulfilled the goal of creating a framework agreement aimed at expanding and strengthening the relationship between the EU and Armenia.⁵³

The CEPA was signed by Armenia and the EU member states on 24 November 2017, then the agreement was fully ratified by all 31 parties on 25 January 2021 and officially entered into force on 1 March 2021.⁵⁴ The Standing Committee on European Integration, a specialized committee of the parliament of Armenia, is responsible for ensuring the terms and agreements of CEPA are implemented in the country. The implementation of the Agreement was agreed to be proceeded through the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities that were signed on 21 February 2018 in order to outline the agenda for regular political dialogue meetings and sectoral discussions as specified in

⁴⁹ European Council, Council of the European Union, Eastern Partnership summit, Riga, 21-22/05/2015 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/05/21-22/>

⁵⁰ Council of the European Union Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009 [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31797/2009_eap_declaration.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31797/2009_eap_declaration.pdf)

⁵¹ EU External Action, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/global-strategy-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy_en

⁵² Zhuchkova Yulia V. EU-ARMENIA: ALL IS NOT LOST? Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia). 2017 p. 66

⁵³ "EU, Armenia Finalize New Deal on Closer Ties". 2017-02-28. <https://asbarez.com/eu-armenia-finalize-new-deal-on-closer-ties/>

⁵⁴ "Armenia-EU Agreement to Enter into Force March 1". Asbarez. Retrieved 12 February 2021. <https://asbarez.com/armenia-eu-agreement-to-enter-into-force-march-1/>

the new Agreement.⁵⁵ The CEPA and the 2018 Partnership Priorities effectively replaced the outdated EU – Armenia PCA of 1996 and its “subordinate” the ENP Action Plan of 2006 as the main framework for the EU - Armenia cooperation.

The CEPA stands out as a distinct legal document among the other EU – partner state agreements by its nature, as simultaneously Armenia is a member of the EAEU another economic union, and the agreement is signed taking that fact into account. In the EaP region, it notably contrasts with the basic Partnership and Cooperation Agreements that were established with numerous post - Soviet countries including Armenia in the 1990s, as well as with the newly architected Association Agreements and DCFTAs signed with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine in 2010s, *“the first of its kind, as it is concluded with a partner country which is at the same time a member of Eurasian Economic Union and in the Eastern Partnership.”* This was how the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President F. Mogherini remarked the newly signed agreement in Brussels, 2017.⁵⁶

3.2. The CEPA, Overview and Structure

The CEPA is aimed at enhancing the bilateral relationship between the EU and Armenia, it is therefore establishing a new partnership level that regulates political and economic cooperation and strengthens trade relations. The CEPA is concluded with the goal of further developing the beforementioned areas, providing a long-term foundation for deeper integration and stronger EU–Armenia ties. Additionally, the agreement is designed to bringing closer and therefore gradually harmonize Armenian laws and regulations with the EU *acquis*.⁵⁷

The agreement represents a crucial step towards enhancing the EU’s political and economic involvement in Armenia and in the South Caucasus region overall. It covers a wide range of

⁵⁵ EEAS European Union and Armenia sign Partnership Priorities 2018 https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/40181_en

⁵⁶ Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following the signing of the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Brussels, 24 November 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/36208/remarks-hrvp-federica-mogherini-following-signingeuropean-union-armenia-comprehensive-and_en

⁵⁷ Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part OJ L 23, 26.1.2018 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:22018A0126\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:22018A0126(01))

cooperation in economic, trade, and political areas. The agreement further develops these sectors, providing a long - term framework for deepening the EU - Armenia relations. The agreement creates and strengthens the groundwork for more effective bilateral engagement between the EU and Armenia by strengthening political dialogue and improving cooperation in different fields of action. Finally, the agreement aims to promote practical and results - oriented cooperation between the parties to achieve peace, security, and stability across Europe and its neighboring regions.

Structurally, the CEPA generally consists of political, economic and sectoral components. The agreement consists of the Preamble, eight Titles which include Chapters, Sections, Subsections and Articles, and the twelve Annexes.

The Preamble of the agreement, among other things, presents the desires of the parties towards the conclusion of the CEPA, recognizes the grounds that act as fundamentals of the bilateral EU-Armenia relations and submits the commitments of the parties towards strengthening and deepening cooperation on the grounds of shared values and principles.

The eight Titles of the agreement are referring to the following fields of cooperation:

1. Title I - The General Principles of the Agreement
2. Title II - Political Dialogue
3. Title III - Justice, Freedom and Security
4. Title IV, V - Cooperation Policy in Economic and Other Sectors
5. Title VI, VII - Trade and Financial Assistance
6. Title VIII - Institutional Provisions

The agreement finishes with the part of the Annexes which act as attachments that provide essential details, statements, and explanations to the main body of the agreement. The Annexes are used to include data, lists, technical information or other detailed figures that would be too inconvenient to include within the main text of the agreement. They help to clarify and emphasize on the provisions stated in the main document.

3.3. The General Principles and Political Dialogue

The political component of the CEPA is mostly identical to the political segment of the unsuccessful EU - Armenia AA and besides some differences closely resembles the political sections of the AAs with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The general principles and political dialogue part of the EU-Armenia CEPA closely resembles that of the previously negotiated the EU - Armenia AA, as there are no formal incompatibilities with the obligations that Armenia took on itself when joining the EAEU, at the same time, the commitments in the CEPA are not legally inferior to those undertaken in the EAEU. Additionally, since there is no EU *acquis* governing political relations and the text is largely declarative and general, negotiations in this area proceeded relatively smoothly. This section outlines the core political objectives that steer the EU-Armenia relationship.⁵⁸

The Title I *Objectives and General Principles* of the CEPA consists of two Articles and basically represents the aims, objectives and the fundamental principles on which the agreement is established. This Title is the shortest of the agreement hence the reason why it is viewed in the same section in connection with the second Title.

Nevertheless, the Title is no less important as it sets out the grounds for the Agreement and it is therefore appropriate to analyze its two articles. Not to repeat the “overview” part of the last section of this chapter it should be noted that the Article 1 *Objectives* states the aims of the parties to achieve, among other things, strengthening of the political and economic partnership between the parties based on shared values and close ties, including more participation in EU policies for Armenia, to strengthen the framework of the political dialogue, contributing towards strengthening the stability of democracy in Armenia as well as by promoting and strengthening regional and international peace and stability by eliminating tensions, ensuring border security, and promoting cross - border cooperation and good relations with neighboring states, enhancing the cooperation in fields of freedom, security, and justice and the reinforcement of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, enhancing mobility of people, supporting Armenia's economic development through international cooperation and alignment with EU laws and establishing high-level trade relations that will comply with the WTO obligations. Ultimately, as

⁵⁸ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 pp. 5-7

stated before, the agreement is aimed at creating conditions for close cooperation in the essential areas of mutual interest of the parties.⁵⁹

The Article 2 *General Principles* outlines the main considered concepts and ideas upon which the agreement is leaning on as its fundamentals. The article states the commitments of the parties to rely on the values, ideas, principles and rights when implementing the provisions of the agreement.

The general principles of the CEPA stated in the Article 2 of the first Title are Respect for democratic principles, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, as outlined in number of international legal acts such as the UN Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe of 1990, the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights. These acts shall hold up the domestic and external policies of the Parties and be an essential element of this Agreement. The Article asserts that The Parties are reaffirming their commitment to free-market economy principles, sustainable development, regional cooperation, and effective multilateralism and that the Parties restate their respect for good governance principles and their international obligations, specifically under the UN, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE.

According to the Article the Parties also commit to fighting corruption, international organized crime and terrorism. They also set a goal of promoting sustainable development, effective multilateralism, and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The EU's Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence Initiative has a role to play in implementing the principles in the areas of its work mentioned. This commitment is crucial for strengthening the relations and cooperation between the Parties and will in turn contribute to regional peace and stability.⁶⁰

The part of the agreement representing the aspect of the political dialogue between the Parties is represented in the Title II *Political Dialogue and Reform; Cooperation in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy* that encompasses the Articles 3-11. This political foundation is essential for strengthening Armenia's commitment towards its shared values with the EU. The provisions of this Title are aimed at boosting the cooperation in enhancing democratic institutions and the

⁵⁹ Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, Article 1

⁶⁰ Ibid, Article 2

judiciary, promoting human rights and the rule of law, ensuring good governance, fighting corruption, encouraging the development of civil society, and improving the trade and investment framework.⁶¹

The Title outlines the cooperation in the field of domestic reforms in Armenia stressing out the compliance of the reform framework with the general principles and aims of the agreement. Among the spectrum of domestic reforms the fight against corruption plays an important role in the cooperation, thus Article 4 (f) states that the effectiveness of fight against corruption should be ensured in particular with a view towards strengthening international cooperation in combating it, and it stresses the importance of effective implementation of relevant international legal instruments, such as the UN Convention Against Corruption of 2003.^{[62][63]}

On an extensive level of the policy, political cooperation should include non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting organized crime including cybercrime, and working together on information sharing, security, crisis management, and regional and international security issues. The agreements general political dialogue provisions are further reinforced by the bilateral Partnership Priorities between the EU and Armenia, which aim to translate these commitments into concrete specific actions.⁶⁴

The Title reaffirms the framework for foreign and security policy cooperation underlining the commitment of the Parties to comply to the principles, processual norms, acts and platforms of the international organizations such as the UN and the OSCE.⁶⁵ As Armenia already being involved in UN and NATO missions such as the Kosovo Force (KFOR) international peacekeeping force and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) a multinational military mission in Afghanistan.⁶⁶ Armenia has advanced its cooperation with the EU through the Common Security

⁶¹ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 pp. 5-7

⁶² Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, Article 4(f)

⁶³ UN Convention Against Corruption 2003 chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.unodc.org/res/ji/import/international_standards/united_nations_convention_against_corruption/united_nations_convention_against_corruption.pdf

⁶⁴ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 7

⁶⁵ Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part OJ L 23, 26.1.2018 (hereinafter CEPA), Article 5

⁶⁶ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia <https://www.mil.am/en/pages/37>

and Defence Policy (CSDP). In January 2017, Armenia's Defence Minister at that time met with Clara Ganslandt, the EEAS Head of Division for CSDP, Partnerships, and Agreements, to prepare for Armenia's first CSDP High-Level Conference for the Eastern Partnership. Co-organised by the EEAS, European Security and Defence College, and Austria, this conference allowed Armenia to propose increased EU support for educational programs and training in the security and defence sectors.⁶⁷

Ultimately the expected reforms in the field of foreign and domestic security include the strengthening of the civilian control and oversight of the armed forces, boosting Armenia's ongoing commitment to Western - oriented defence reforms. The structural changes, modernization, military education, enhancing threat awareness, and crisis response in counter-terrorism and natural disasters are among the main goals of the envisioned reforms. Additionally, the reforms should address local and community security issues in border areas and aim to deepen cooperation by adopting best practices in cybersecurity.⁶⁸

3.4. Justice, Freedom and Security

The Title III of CEPA is called *Justice, Freedom and Security*, it includes the Articles 12 -21. This part of the Agreement mainly focuses on the fields of rule of law, the judiciary and fundamental freedoms. Nevertheless containing broadly defined provisions, this Title stresses out the fundamentals of cooperation in some of the essential spheres of human rights, civil liberties and fight against crime and points out the important role of judiciary for effective implementation of these principles. Article 12 of the Agreement presents the logic of the whole Title stating that: *(1) In their cooperation in the area of freedom, security and justice, the Parties shall attach particular importance to the consolidation of the rule of law, including the independence of the judiciary, access to justice, the right to a fair trial as provided for by the European Convention on Human Rights, and procedural safeguards in criminal matters and victims' rights.*

⁶⁷ “Armenia-EU meeting on defense takes place in Yerevan”, Mediamax news agency, 18 January 2017 (<http://www.mediamax.am/en/news/armypolice/21507/>).

⁶⁸ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 9

(2)The Parties shall cooperate fully with regard to the effective functioning of institutions in the areas of law enforcement, the fight against corruption and the administration of justice.

(3)Respect for human rights, non-discrimination and fundamental freedoms shall guide all cooperation on freedom, security and justice.

The Title contains a provision regarding the Data Protection, the grounds for cooperation in that field is formed in the Article 13 of the Agreement.

Provisions regarding the mobility of people are also presented in this Title. The Agreement addresses the cooperation on legal and irregular migration, border management, asylum, return policies, and the movement of people. A current key issue is the start of a visa - liberalization process, which is carefully referenced in Article 15 of the Title. Visa - liberalization has been a major incentive for EaP states, including Armenia. For Armenia, it serves as another important motivator for successfully implementing the Agreement. Considering the experience of the EaP member countries with the issue of visa - liberalization, the visa - liberalization dialogue will focus not only on security standards but also on principles related to fundamental rights.^{[69][70]}

The Mobility Partnership with Armenia was first signed in 2011, involving the EU, 10 of its member states, and Armenia. This agreement's goal is to enhance the mobility of people between their territories while improving migration flow management and reducing irregular immigration. As part of this initiative, the EU - Armenia Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements were signed and entered into force in January 2014.⁷¹ In September 2016, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs formally requested the initiation of a visa - liberalization dialogue, but the request was rejected.⁷²

EU established a standard model for process of visa - liberalization called Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) that contains blocks of requirements after fulfillment of which the visa-

⁶⁹ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p.11

⁷⁰ Visa liberalisation with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/whatwe-do/policies/international-affairs/eastern-partnership/visa-liberalisation-moldova-ukraine-and-georgia_en

⁷¹ EC Mobility partnerships, visa facilitation and readmission agreements https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/international-affairs/collaboration-countries/eastern-partnership/mobility-partnerships-visa-facilitation-and-readmission-agreements_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20and%20the%20Republic,into%20force%20in%20January%202014.

⁷² Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p.11

liberalization can take full effect, The four blocks of VLAP are structured into: 1. Document security, including biometric passports; 2. Integrated border management, migration management and asylum; 3. Public order and security and 4. External relations and fundamental rights. After these requirements are assessed by the Commission and it decides that the requirements are met, the EU Council and Parliament may grant a visa - free travel possibility to the EU territory for short - term stays as long-term visas are regulated by the EU member states individually.⁷³ As of 2024 Armenia there is still no commenced visa-liberalization process with EU.

The Title also includes provisions on reinforcing Armenia's commitment in fight against organized crime, corruption, money - laundering and terrorism fighting, as well as encouraging cooperation in fight against combating illicit drugs and in fight against terrorism in general.⁷⁴ In the last years Armenia significantly improved its corruption indicators. Among the 180 countries included in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index of 2023, Armenia was ranked as number 62 in the list scoring 47 out of 100 points, a result more positive than such EU members as Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, despite being ranked at number 113 in 2016.⁷⁵

The bribery rates has also decreased significantly, in 2016 Transparency International report on bribery rates in Europe and Central Asia the rate of bribery in Armenia was at 24%, in 2023 though, percentage of public service users paid a bribe in the previous 12 months was at 19%.^{[76][77]}

The Article 20 of the Title establishes the fundament for legal cooperation between the Parties, the Article submits that: *(1) The Parties agree to develop judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters as regards the negotiation, ratification and implementation of multilateral conventions on civil judicial cooperation and, in particular, the Conventions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the fields of international legal cooperation and litigation as well as the protection of children.*

⁷³ EC Mobility partnerships, visa facilitation and readmission agreements https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/international-affairs/collaboration-countries/eastern-partnership/mobility-partnerships-visa-facilitation-and-readmission-agreements_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20and%20the%20Republic,into%20force%20in%20January%202014.

⁷⁴ CEPA 2018, Articles 16-19

⁷⁵ Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/armenia>

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Transparency International Governments are doing a poor job at fighting corruption across Europe and Central Asia, 2016 <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/europe-and-central-asia/europe-central-asia-2016>

(2) As regards judicial cooperation in criminal matters, the Parties shall seek to enhance cooperation on mutual legal assistance on the basis of relevant multilateral agreements. Such cooperation shall include, where appropriate, accession to, and implementation of, the relevant international instruments of the UN and the Council of Europe and closer cooperation between Eurojust and the competent authorities of the Republic of Armenia.

3.5. Cooperation Policy in Economic and Other Sectors

The sectoral cooperation section of CEPA is comprehensive, covering different chapters on diverse topics including energy, environment, economic dialogue, accounting and auditing, corporate governance, social policy, employment, taxation, public finances, cross-border and regional cooperation, transport, education, and civil society. This study concentrates on a few key sectors.

In numerous areas, Armenia is undertaking to gradually align its legislation with the legal system of EU and International Law within the timeframes specified in the Agreement. The practicality of these commitments is enhanced by the legislative and regulatory harmonization already accomplished during the preparatory and negotiation phases.⁷⁸

The CEPA Parties considerably relied on the already existing texts of the negotiated, but not concluded Armenia - EU AA. The Parties first agreed on the main body of the text and after that reviewed the lists of the EU legal acts to be included in the agreement, with the timeframe for approximation of them. This process had to consider the new EU legislation as well as the EAEU legal system to ensure or minimize arising of contradictions in the future. These included issues are usually highly technical, particularly at the level of individual product standards.⁷⁹

The cooperation policy in the economic and numerous other sectors is included in the Title IV *Economic Cooperation* and Title V *Other Cooperation Policies* of the CEPA.

Title IV consists of Chapter I *Economic dialogue*, Chapter II *Taxation* and Chapter III *Statistics* with their respective Articles of 22 - 35. The Article 22 of the Chapter I states that: *(1) The European Union and the Republic of Armenia shall facilitate the process of economic reform by*

⁷⁸ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p.12

⁷⁹ Ibid

improving shared understanding of the fundamentals of each economy and the formulation and implementation of economic policies.

(2) The Republic of Armenia shall take further steps to develop a well-functioning market economy and to gradually approximate its economic and financial regulations and policies to those of the European Union, as agreed by this Agreement. The European Union will support the Republic of Armenia in ensuring sound macroeconomic policies, including central-bank independence and price stability, sound public finances, and a sustainable exchange-rate regime and balance of payments.

Article 23 of the Chapter submits the agreement of the Parties to conduct a regular economic dialogue aimed at exchanging information on macroeconomic trends, policies, and structural reforms, including economic development strategies, sharing expertise and best practices in public finance, monetary and exchange-rate policies, financial-sector policies, and economic statistics, exchanging information and experiences on regional economic integration, including the European economic and monetary union and reviewing the status of bilateral cooperation in economic, financial, and statistical fields.

The Article 24 of the Chapter sets the objectives of the Parties in cooperation in the field of public sector internal control and auditing arrangements such as further developing and implementing the public internal control system in accordance with the principle of decentralized managerial accountability, developing an adequate financial inspection system in Armenia, supporting the central harmonization unit for public internal financial control in Armenia and strengthening its ability to steer the reform process, further strengthening the Audit Chamber as the supreme audit institution in Armenia and providing for the exchange of information, experiences and good practice.⁸⁰

The Chapter II of the Title IV regards the cooperation in the field of Taxation in the provisions of the Articles 25 - 30. In this Articles it is stated that the Parties will enhance tax governance to boost economic relations, trade, investment, and cooperation, will implement good tax governance principles like transparency and fair competition, improve international tax cooperation, and enhance tax collection, will collaborate to strengthen Armenia's tax system and administration,

⁸⁰ CEPA Title IV, Chapter I

ensuring effective collection, combating tax fraud and avoidance, and upholding non-discrimination between imported and domestic products as per GATT 1994, will work together to combat fraud and smuggling of excisable products, exchanging information and enhancing regional cooperation in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of 2003 and to conduct a regular dialogue will take place on the issues covered in this Chapter.⁸¹

The Chapter III of the Title sets the grounds for cooperation in the issues of Statistics. The Article 30 sets that: *The Parties shall develop and strengthen their cooperation on statistical issues, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of providing timely, internationally comparable and reliable statistical data. It is expected that a sustainable, efficient and professionally independent national statistical system shall produce information relevant for citizens, businesses and decision-makers in the European Union and in the Republic of Armenia, enabling them to take informed decisions on that basis. The national statistical system shall respect the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and take into account the EU acquis in the field of statistics, including the European Statistics Code of Practice, in order to align national statistical production with European norms and standards.* Furthermore, the Chapter includes provisions on alignment of Armenian statistical system with the norms and practice applied in the European Statistical System and *inter alia* Armenia's commitment of gradual alignment of its legislation in statistics with the EU *acquis*, following the annually updated Statistical Requirements Compendium produced by Eurostat, which is treated as annexed to this Agreement by the Parties.⁸²

The Title V *Other Cooperation Policies* consists of Articles 36 - 112 and 23 Chapters on cooperation in different sectors with the most essential ones are felicitously described in the CEPS report of Hrant Kostanyan and Richard Giragosian "EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course". These sectors will be analyzed hereinafter.⁸³

I. Transport

The Chapter 1 of the Title regards Transport. The CEPA encourages the advancement of road, rail, and air transport, aiming at bringing these fields closer to the EU standards. In the Agreement the EU also supports Armenia's road infrastructure development, including the North-South Road

⁸¹ CEPA Title IV, Chapter II

⁸² CEPA Title IV, Chapter III

⁸³ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3

Corridor, facilitated by the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) to enhance transport routes from Iran and beyond via Georgia's ports to the EU.⁸⁴

Another important aspect that will potentially impact Armenia's tourism development and demonstrate governmental commitment, is the air transport sector, specifically the "open skies". With the European Commission authorized to negotiate a comprehensive EU-Armenia Air Transport Agreement and a EU – Armenia Common Aviation Area Agreement being signed in 2021.⁸⁵ This area is likely to garner significant attention and implementation efforts from Armenia under the agreement.

II. Energy Cooperation

Chapter 2 of the Title is on the Energy cooperation. Within the energy sector of the CEPA, the gas sector coverage is minimal and restricted by the absence of annexed EU legal acts. Notably, there is no mention of the European Energy Community Treaty, which the three AA DCFTA states have joined to eventually adopt the EU energy law. For Armenia, prospects for energy cooperation are restricted due to the country's heavy reliance on Russian natural gas imports. Armenia is the only country in the region that has a nuclear power plant and that fact was always posing as a major issue in energetic cooperation with the EU, the Union pushed for decommissioning of the plant, but as it is one of the main electricity producing facilities in the country it is nearly impossible to create a substitution for it.⁸⁶ Moreover in natural gas sector Armenia and Russia signed an agreement in 2013, highly unpopular in Armenia, that grants the Russian state-owned "Gazprom" a monopoly to operate pipelines until 2043 and restricts Armenia from making changes or annulling laws and decision or issue decrees that will contradict the agreement until 31 December 2043.⁸⁷ To this day Armenia heavily relies on Russia in the field of energy, therefore the EU – Armenia cooperation in this area is lacking.

⁸⁴ "The EU Bank and Armenia Sign Agreement Related to the EUR 12 Million to Support Construction of the North-South Road Corridor", Hetq investigative journalists, 18 November 2016 (<http://hetq.am/eng/news/72863/the-eu-bank-and-armenia-sign-agreement-related-to-the-eur-12-million-to-support-construction-of-the-north-south-road-corridor.html>).

⁸⁵ European Council, Aviation: EU and Armenia sign aviation agreement https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/aviation-eu-and-armenia-sign-aviation-agreement-2021-11-15_en

⁸⁶ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 13

⁸⁷ Radio Freedom, New Details Of Russian-Armenian Gas Deal Emerge, 2013 <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/25204160.html>

III. Environment and Climate Change

Chapters 3 and 4 of the Title contains provisions on the cooperation in the field of environment and climate change. Despite the significant budgetary implications of EU environmental directives, Armenia's CEPA is still very ambitious about energy efficiency, environmental protection, and climate change. Armenia has retained most of the environmental and climate action provisions from its negotiated AA, although with some extended implementation timelines. This commitment covers directives related to environmental governance, water (e.g., Directive 91/676/EC), air quality (Directive 2008/50/EC), industrial emissions (Directive 2010/75/EU), waste management (Directive 2008/98/EC), hazardous substances (Directive 96/82/EC), and chemicals and nature protection (Directive 2009/147/EC).⁸⁸

IV. Employment, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities

The Chapter 15 of the Title sets grounds for cooperation in the sectors of employment, social policy and equal opportunities. The obligations set on Armenia by the Agreements include equal treatment, including gender and racial equality, anti-discrimination, employment safety, social policy, and equal opportunities. These provisions strengthen Armenia's obligations under the GSP+, which requires the adoption and enforcement of numerous international treaties on the issue. The sectors on equal opportunities, social policy, and employment include significant EU regulations on workplace safety, equal treatment, gender and racial equality, anti-discrimination, and key labor market rules.⁸⁹

V. Regional Cooperation, Education and Civil Society

The provisions in regard of regional cooperation, education, and civil society included in this Title of the Agreement are not legally binding but are, nevertheless of high importance to the EU - Armenia cooperation. The CEPA announces Armenia's associate membership in Horizon 2020 and aims at strengthening its participation in Erasmus+ and the Bologna process. The EU encourages civil society, with the Agreement creating a platform aimed at eventually including organizations from the Eastern Partnership's Armenian civil society forum.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 14

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 15

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 16

The Agreement in this Title also includes chapters with provisions on cooperation in the cultural field, consumer protection, agriculture and rural development, tourism, mining etc.⁹¹

3.6. Trade and Financial Assistance

The Title VI of the Agreement regards the *Trade and Trade Related Matters*, it includes the Articles 113 – 342 that are contained in 13 Chapters: Trade in goods, Customs, Technical barriers to trade, Sanitary and phytosanitary matters, Trade in services, establishment and electronic commerce, Current payments and movement of capital, Intellectual property, Public procurement, Trade and sustainable development, Competition, State owned enterprises, Transparency and Dispute settlement. Cooperation of Armenia and the EU in the sphere of trade is the field that is the most affected by the countries membership in the EAEU and its Customs Union, this clearly sets the foreign trade inclination of Armenia towards the Moscow oriented markets. Nevertheless, in 2023 the trade with the EU accounted for around 12.6% of Armenia's total foreign trade, The EU is Armenia's second-largest source of imports, accounting for 15.4% of the country's total imports, with the EU imports accounting for 0.8 € bn and the exports for 2.2 € bn in 2023, additionally the trade in service in 2022 corresponded as 0.4 € bn for the EU imports and 0.4 € bn for the EU exports, while the foreign direct investments of the same years reported 0.2 € bn and 0.8 € bn of inwards and outwards stocks respectively.⁹²

The Agreement could not commit to tariff liberalization due to already mentioned fact of Armenia's membership in the EAEU, at the same time both Parties reaffirm their commitment to WTO principles. The EU's exports to Armenia are subject to the EAEU's common external tariff, but Armenia can apply its former WTO tariff levels to about 800 tariff lines due to transitional arrangements with the EAEU.

Subsequently Armenia's exports to the EU face the EU's common external tariff, but Armenia benefits from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP+), allowing it to export goods under

⁹¹ CEPA, Title V

⁹² European Commission, Armenia EU trade relations with Armenia. Facts, figures and latest developments. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/armenia_en#:~:text=Trade%20picture,Armenia's%20total%20exports%20in%202022.

6,400 tariff lines to the EU with zero or reduced tariffs. This access is less favorable than the 99% tariff-free access Armenia would have had under the DCFTA.⁹³

The EU's GSP+ scheme is created for economically weak countries that have difficulty at diversifying their exports to the EU and integrating into the global trading system. In exchange, these receiving countries are obliged to implement 27 core international conventions related to good governance, human rights, labor standards, and environmental protection. The European Commission regularly reviews how well countries are implementing GSP+. ⁹⁴

This Title of the Agreement also includes provisions on customs procedures, technical barriers to trade (TBTs), and sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS). However, since these areas are primarily under the jurisdiction of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the chapters are less detailed than those in the DCFTAs.⁹⁵

The customs chapter in CEPA is also relatively superficial. The EAEU has its own customs rules and procedures, including a Customs Code that Armenia is obliged to follow and implement. Although, Armenia is also a member of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and will continue to fulfill its obligations to this organization. CEPA aims to enhance dialogue and encourage the exchange of experiences and best practices.⁹⁶

The TBT provisions in the Title are based on the WTO TBT agreement. Not like the DCFTA concluded states, Armenia has no obligation of harmonizing in this field with the EU regulations, accreditation, standardization, or conformity assessment. Instead, The Title of the Agreement contains a general commitment to engage in dialogue with the EU and share information on best practices.⁹⁷

This Title as well contains provisions on competition, state aid and public procurement, intellectual property rights, trade in services, etc. in the already mentioned Chapters respectively.⁹⁸

⁹³ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 p. 19

⁹⁴ Eur-Lex Generalised system of preferences (GSP) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/generalised-system-of-preferences-gsp.html#:~:text=First%20created%20in%201971%2C%20the,creating%20poverty%20and%20creating%20jobs.>

⁹⁵ Hrant Kostanyan, Richard Giragosian EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course CEPS Research Report No. 2017-14, November 2017, ISBN: 978-94-6138-640-3 pp. 21-22

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ CEPA, Title VI

The Title VII *Financial Assistance, and Anti-Fraud and Control Provisions* of the Agreement includes the Articles 343 – 361 that are contained in two Chapters, Chapter I *Financial assistance*, and Chapter II *Anti-fraud and control provisions*. The Article 343 of the first Chapter states that: “*The Republic of Armenia shall benefit from financial assistance through the relevant funding mechanisms and instruments of the European Union. The Republic of Armenia may also benefit from loans from the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international financial institutions. The financial assistance shall contribute to achieving the objectives of this Agreement and shall be provided in accordance this Chapter*”, and the Article 349 of the second Chapter: “*This Chapter shall be applicable to any further agreement or financing instrument to be concluded between the Parties, and any other financing instrument of the European Union to which the authorities of the Republic of Armenia or other entities or persons under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Armenia may be associated, without prejudice to any other additional clauses covering audits, on-the-spot checks, inspections, controls and anti-fraud measures, including those conducted by the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).*”⁹⁹

3.7. Institutional Provisions

The Title VIII, (Articles 362-386) Chapter 1 *Institutional framework* of the CEPA includes the provisions establishing the Institutions that will assist the implementation and functioning of the Agreement. The Article 362 establishes the Partnership Council that comprises of ministerial-level representatives from the EU and Armenia and will oversee and review the Agreement and organize at least annual meetings. It stresses out the main issues, makes binding decisions and recommendations, and exchanges legislative information. The Partnership Council can also update or amend Annexes of the Agreement, except under Title VI.¹⁰⁰

The Articles 363 and 364 announce the creation of the Partnership Committee and the Sub-committees and other Bodies. A Partnership Committee, made up of senior officials from both of the Parties, assists the Partnership Council, meeting at least annually and changing chairing between the EU and Armenia. It can delegate decision - making powers, including adopting

⁹⁹ CEPA, Title VII

¹⁰⁰ CEPA, Title VIII, Chapter 1

binding decisions, and addresses Title VI issues every year. The Subcommittees support the Committee, reporting regularly. The Partnership Council can create and define the roles of these bodies. Issues can be directly brought to the Committee by the both Parties.¹⁰¹

The Article 365 establishes the Parliamentary Partnership Committee, with members from the European Parliament and the Armenian Parliament. It serves as a forum for dialogue, and sets its own schedule and rules, with alternating chairs. The Committee can request information from the Partnership Council, receive its decisions, and make recommendations. It can also establish subcommittees.¹⁰²

Finally, the Article 363 sets the Civil Society Platform. It establishes that the Parties will hold regular meetings with civil society to inform and gather input on the Agreement's implementation. A Civil Society Platform, including EU and Armenian members, will serve as a dialogue forum. It sets its own schedule and rules, and is again alternately chaired by the EU and the Armenian representatives. The Platform, informed of Partnership Council decisions, can make recommendations to the Council and Committees, which will maintain regular contact with it.^{[103][104]}

The Chapter 2 of the Title includes *general and final provisions* such as approximation, non-discrimination, dispute settlement, duration, relation to other agreements and others.¹⁰⁵

3.8. The Role of CEPA in Armenian Domestic Legal System

According to the domestic constitutional law of Armenia, the CEPA is considered as an international treaty. The Constitution of Armenia (adopted in 1995 and lately amended in 2015) is the legal act that sets the regulatory fundament of the signing and implementation and legal status of international treaties in the country. The Article 5(3) of the Constitution states that: “*In case there are contradictions between the norms of international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia and the norms of laws, the norms of the international treaties shall be applied.*”. The

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ EESC The EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/sections-other-bodies/other/eu-armenia-civil-society-platform>

¹⁰⁵ CEPA, Title VIII, Chapter 2, Articles 367-386

Article 116 of the Constitution sets the rules of ratification, suspension, or renunciation of international treaties, precisely defined it submits that the National Assembly (Parliament) of Armenia is the structure that shall ratify, suspend, or renounce international treaties in majority of cases, and the Paragraphs (2) and (3) of the Article state that: *“The National Assembly shall, by proposal of the Government, ratify, suspend, and renounce international treaties by means of adopting a law by majority vote of the total number of parliamentarians.”*, *“International treaties contravening the Constitution may not be ratified.”*.

In order to determine whether the potential international treaty complies with the provisions of the Armenian Constitution, before the process of ratification of the treaty by the Parliament, the treaty is examined in the Constitutional Court of Armenia the highest legal body for constitutional review in the country. The Article 168(3) of the Constitution establishes that: *“Prior to the ratification of an international treaty, determine the conformity with the Constitution of obligations enshrined therein;”*.¹⁰⁶

Following the procedural regulations set by the Armenian Constitution, On 16 March 2018 the Constitutional Court of the Republic made a revision of the CEPA with the purpose of determination of its conformity with the Constitution, and it was established that no contradictions between the provisions of Constitution and the provisions of the CEPA were present.¹⁰⁷

Another significant topic is the legal status of decisions made by the institutions established under the CEPA within the domestic legal system of Armenian. As already mentioned in the previous subchapter, two bodies that are created under the CEPA, the Partnership Council and the Partnership Committee are conferred with the authority to make binding decisions.

These decisions can be classified into two categories, first, the decisions by the Partnership Council that require updating the Annexes to the CEPA to incorporate developments in the EU legislation for alignment as stated in the Article 371 of the agreement, and second are the other decisions. According to Armenian constitutional law, implementing the first type of decision requires

¹⁰⁶ Constitution of Armenia 2015 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Armenia_2015

¹⁰⁷ DCC-1407 of 16 March 2017 “On the Case of Conformity of the Obligations Stipulated by Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Armenia, of the One Part, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the Other Part, signed in Brussels on 24 November 2017 with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia” eng. <http://concourt.am/armenian/decisions/common/2018/pdf/sdv-1407.pdf>, arm. <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=120651>

ratifying the amendments to the Annexes in the same procedural course as an international treaty itself is ratified.¹⁰⁸

One of the issues of the role of CEPA in Armenian legal system is the approximation of the Armenian legislature under the agreement. The mechanisms for legislative approximation outlined in CEPA are similar to those in the AAs, though they are less advanced and ambitious due to CEPA's more modest objectives. The CEPA's approximation mechanisms are varied and placed in binding provisions.

The agreement emphasizes not only the step-by-step positioning of Armenian legislation with the EU legal system but also the implementation and enforcement of the aligned legislation. Article 372 of CEPA establishes specific mechanisms for monitoring and assessing this approximation, stating that these mechanisms "shall include aspects of implementation and enforcement". Besides reporting on the progress of approximation, the assessment "may include on-the-spot missions, with the participation of institutions of the European Union, bodies and agencies, non-governmental bodies, supervisory authorities, independent experts, and others, as necessary" as stated in Paragraph 3 of the same Article.¹⁰⁹

In the CEPA two types of legislative approximation provisions can be differentiated as those establishing mechanisms of approximation in the specific sectors of cooperation like energy, environment, transport, employment, social policy etc. and the "horizontal" provisions adding to the mechanisms of sectoral approximation, this differentiation resembles the nature of the AAs of 2010s. Anna Khvorostiankina in her article on the issue made a description of this differentiation. In the First group of provisions, the following types of legal approximation can be differentiated:¹¹⁰

1. Provisions that oblige the implementation of international instruments and compliance to international standards. These commitments can be general; for example, under Article 13 of the Agreement; "Protection of personal data," the Parties "agree to cooperate to ensure a high level of protection of personal data in accordance with the international legal instruments and standards of the European Union, Council of Europe, and other

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Paragraph 11

¹⁰⁹ Anna Khvorostiankina EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement: What Does It Mean for Armenian Legal System ? 2018 pp. 14-15 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331037243_EU-Armenia_Comprehensive_and_Enhanced_Partnership_Agreement_What_Does_It_Mean_for_Armenian_Legal_System

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 15-16

international bodies.” Alternatively, they can be specifically defined, such as provisions requiring the implementation of specific Conventions in the field of intellectual property.

2. The provisions requiring the approximation of Armenian legislation to the EU *acquis* vary in their binding character and distinction. Some of the provisions are not specifying the relevant acts but are stressing out the need of eventual approximation. For instance: Articles 169, 180, and 192 of Title VI on Trade and Trade-Related Matters highlight the importance of gradually bringing closer Armenian laws on postal services, electronic commerce, and transport services with those of the EU. Article 189 states that Armenia should approximate its financial services regulations to those of the EU as appropriate. Another example is the Article 70 that states that the Parties should cooperate to promote agricultural and rural development through the progressive combination of policies and legislation. There are also provisions based on "taking into account" and "making efforts." For example, Article 30 of Chapter 3 on statistics in Title IV of the Agreement requires the national statistical system to respect the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and consider the EU *acquis* in the field of statistics, including the European Statistics Code of Practice, to arrange in line Armenian statistical production with European norms and standards.
3. The provisions that include standard approximation clauses that specify certain EU legal acts and their transposition timeframes (listed in the Annexes).¹¹¹ Found in Title V (Other Cooperation Policies) and Title VII (Financial Assistance, and Anti-Fraud and Control Provisions), these clauses don't open markets but may be part of other conditional mechanisms. The Annexes of the Agreement specify the EU legal acts, among them regulations and directives. While these acts differ in direct effect and applicability under the EU legal system, this difference is basically irrelevant in the case of legislative approximation since both types need to be implemented into Armenia's legal system first and therefore are not directly applicable. Additionally, Armenia's obligations may be

¹¹¹ CEPA Article 41 with Annex I (transport), Art. 44 with Annex II (energy), Art. 50 with Annex III (environment), Art. 56 with Annex IV (climate), Art. 65 with Annex V (information society), Art. 83 with Annex VI (consumer protection), Art. 90 with Annex VII (employment, social policy and equal opportunities), Art. 361 with Annex XII (anti-fraud regulations).

limited to specific provisions rather than entire EU legal acts, due to the specific nature of approximation unlike the legal processes taking place within EU.

The second group, that can be called “horizontal” legislative approximation provisions, includes the Article 370, which requires Armenia to gradually approximate its legislation with the EU legal system as listed in the Annexes, based on the commitments in the Agreement, with exceptions for specific provisions under the Title VI. Article 371, titled “Dynamic Approximation”, states that the Partnership Council will periodically update the Annexes to reflect changes in the EU law and relevant international standards, considering the Parties’ internal procedures. As stated before the Constitutional Court of Armenia has ruled that such updates to the Annexes are considered amendments to the Agreement and require ratification in the same manner as the original Agreement.¹¹²

It should be pointed that, in addition to the legislative approximation requirements in specific sectors, other commitments are also directed to the improvement of legislative regulation in Armenia generally. In particular, according to the Article 308, “Recognising the impact which their respective regulatory environment may have on trade and investment between them, the Parties shall provide a predictable regulatory environment and efficient procedures for economic operators, in particular for SMEs”. Under the Article 313, the Parties shall cooperate in promoting regulatory quality and performance and support the principles of good administrative behaviour. Title VI Trade and Trade-Related Matters sets out the requirements of legal certainty. Specifically, according to the Article 309 (1), each Party shall ensure that measures of general application adopted after the entry into force of this Agreement:

- (a) are *promptly* and *readily available* via an officially designated medium, including electronic means, in such a manner as to enable any person to become acquainted with them;
- (b) *clearly state* to the extent possible, the objective of and rationale for such measures; and
- (c) allow for a *sufficient* period of time between publication and entry into force of such measures, except in duly justified cases.

¹¹² DCC-1407 of 16 March 2017, Paragraph 11

It is believed that these provisions contain the potential of assisting the development of Armenian legal system in case of the full and proper implementation of those.¹¹³

Chapter 4: Conclusions

The Republic of Armenia and the European Union, since the early years of Armenia's independence were involved in complex relationships that encompassed creation of several legal acts as a framework of these relationships. The relationship between the EU and Armenia have to be observed with taking account of the geographic aspects of the Parties. Armenia since 1990s is involved in a military and political conflict with its two neighbors, Azerbaijan and Turkey with both of which Armenia has the longest border, the geopolitical realities of this resulted in Armenia's disproportionate reliance on the Russian Federation in matters of defense, economic and energetic policy. Nevertheless, Armenia was always inclined towards deepening its cooperation with the EU, first in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) was signed in 1996 that regulated the relations between the Parties by creating a framework for cooperation, the PCA's were the series of agreements concluded by the ex - Soviet states and the EU¹¹⁴. In 2000s the EU initiated the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as part of its European Neighborhood Policy aimed at boosting the European aspirations and integration of the non - EU states of the Eastern Europe including Armenia.¹¹⁵ In 2010s the EU initiated negotiations with several of the EaP countries to conclude Association Agreements (AAs) a new generation of cooperation agreements that will include Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), Armenia failed at concluding the AA on its part as it was pushed to join the Russian dominated Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) obligations of which were incompatible with the AA.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless the political will of the EU

¹¹³ Anna Khvorostiankina EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement: What Does It Mean for Armenian Legal System ? 2018 pp. 17-19 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331037243_EU-Armenia_Comprehensive_and_Enhanced_Partnership_Agreement_What_Does_It_Mean_for_Armenian_Legal_System

¹¹⁴ Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part - Protocol on mutual assistance between authorities in customs matters - Final Act - Joint Declarations - Exchange of Letters in relation to the establishment of companies - Declaration of the French Government Official Journal L 239 , 09/09/1999 P. 0003 – 0050 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A21999A0909%2801%29>

¹¹⁵ EEAS, EaP https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eastern-partnership_en

¹¹⁶ Giragosian, Richard (2014) "Armenia's Strategic U-Turn", ECFR Policy Memo No. 99, European Council on Foreign Relations (www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR99_ARMENIA_MEMO_AW.pdf).

and Armenia made it possible to sign the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2017 a “light” version of an AA that excludes the DCFTA part of it.¹¹⁷

Ultimately the main obstacle of Armenia’s European integration is its geopolitical situation of having a still ongoing conflict with its neighbors and its over reliant relations with Russia, in the period of 2020 – 2023, when Armenia and Azerbaijan had a full scale war and numerous smaller military conflicts the reliance on Russia was proven to be a serious strategic mistake as Russia and especially its peacekeeping force and the Russian dominated military bloc the CSTO, part of which Armenia is failed at fulfilling their obligations towards Armenia in the sphere of defense. Armenian government today is trying to distance itself from Russia and its sphere of influence, and one of the mechanism of this process is deepening its relations with the EU, since 2023 the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) is stationed in Armenia and in 2024 the EU officially announced that Armenia meets the criteria for future membership in the Union, although there are still numerous obstacles for Armenia’s further European integration.

For Armenia to be able to further boost its cooperation and integration with the EU the country must take action in several spheres of its domestic and international policies. The CEPA is the main framework agreement between the EU and Armenia setting the grounds for cooperation. Armenia has to implement the provisions of the Agreement and standardize its institutions according to the CEPA as the first and most tangible step towards deepening the cooperation with the EU. The main problem of Armenia’s future EU candidacy status is its membership in the EAEU, obviously a country can not be a member of two economic and customs unions at the same time, thus Armenia will have to eventually withdraw from the EAEU in order of fulfilling its European aspirations, a highly complicated issue as the countries economic and energetic spheres are heavily influenced by Russia and changing of it will require strong political will, a not short period of time and foreign assistance.

To make a conclusion, Armenia’s future membership in the European Union stands as a very complicated issue, nevertheless the country has the potential and real prospect of taking the level of cooperation with the EU to the deepest point possible with the geopolitical realities of today.

¹¹⁷ Comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part OJ L 23, 26.1.2018 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:22018A0126\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:22018A0126(01))

with the political will and inclination towards European integration Armenia is able to act according to the options that are present today. The options of that process are among others the implementation of the provisions of the CEPA including boosting cooperation in economic, trade, energetic and financial matters to bring it closer to the EU acquis and for it to benefit Armenia's strategy of political and economic differentiation.

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