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BRIEFING

TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS

Abstract

The two protocols signed by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers in Zurich in October 2009 addressed the twin issues of establishing diplomatic relations and reopening the closed Armenian-Turkish border. They offered a strategic roadmap for each country to “normalise” relations as a first step toward the broader process of reconciliation.

Since the signing of the protocols, however, the “normalisation” process has dramatically stalled, with official state-level engagement suspended. During this period, despite several new opportunities for reengagement or reactivity, each side has retreated to their previously hard-line positions.

The two briefing papers drafted respectively by a Turkish and an Armenian analyst assess the past efforts and the current state of play of Turkey-Armenia relations, suggest possible future scenarios and present several specific recommendations for action.

This briefing was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After a long period of secret diplomacy between Armenia and Turkey that was mediated by the Swiss, the Armenian and Turkish presidents launched a new effort of direct, bilateral diplomacy that came to be known as “football diplomacy.” That process, which included the historic, first-ever reciprocal visits of the presidents of Armenia and Turkey to each other’s country, culminated in the signing of two diplomatic “protocols” by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers in Zurich in October 2009. The two protocols, addressing the twin issues of establishing diplomatic relations and reopening the closed Armenian-Turkish border, offered a strategic roadmap for each country to “normalise” relations as a first step toward the broader process of reconciliation.

Since the signing of the protocols, however, the “normalisation” process has dramatically stalled, with official state-level engagement suspended. During this period, despite several new opportunities for reengagement or reactivity, each side has retreated to their previously hard-line positions.

TURKISH VIEW

Today, the Protocols could be considered as “frozen to death”.

Turkey, with its unlimited energy needs, has found in Azerbaijan a precious associate that will be very difficult to dissociate with in a foreseeable future, at the expense of a normalisation with Armenia as well as dealing with the taboo of genocide. Turkish domestic politics, the political interests of the ruling party and the ambitions of Prime Minister Erdoğan who is embarked in a vital electoral course, have prevailed and should continue to prevail in the years to come. The Azeri factor is an integral part of this policy line which has dropped the normalisation process with Armenia off the political agenda. Quite to the contrary, the Turkish government is now showing signs in the other direction. Despite the gloomy official environment Turkish civil society is continuing its relentless efforts to meet its Armenian counterpart to interact, cooperate with it. Similarly taboos regarding Armenians are systematically challenged in Turkey through civil activism.

ARMENIAN VIEW

There are renewed signs of optimism and a looming opportunity for restarting diplomacy and fulfilling the earlier expectations of a normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey.

More specifically, this optimism stems from several major drivers. First, for Armenia, a new bid to re-engage Turkey is bolstered by the current domestic political context, which favours a chance for statesmanship by Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian, now re-elected to his second and final term as president. Second, a resumption of the normalisation process also offers the Armenian government an important opportunity to repair the damage and regain legitimacy in the wake of the recent decision by the Armenian president to join the Russian-led Customs Union, and thereby ending the chance to forge an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). And for Turkey, diplomatic re-engagement with Armenia is now seen as a crucial prerequisite to fulfil its ambitions as a regional player, while also helping to limit the negative consequences from the 1915 Armenian genocide, as the 100th anniversary looms. Moreover, there is also a new opportunity for implementing new, innovative ideas and creative incentives capable of encouraging and empowering Armenia and Turkey to normalise relations.

PART I: PAPER BY CENGİZ AKTAR - TURKISH EXPERT

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1. THE FATE OF THE PROTOCOLS

In 2009, the signature of Zürich Protocols between Armenia and Turkey was a brave initiative aimed at normalising relations. For the first time in almost a century, it meant that the Turkish state took the initiative to follow a different policy line than the one based on an eternal enmity directly related to the denial of the Armenian genocide.

Secret talks started in August 2007 in Switzerland when the present Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu was a very influential foreign policy adviser over the Prime Minister Erdoğan. The Protocols were parts and parcels of Davutoğlu's famous "zero problem policy with neighbours" implying proactive policies with every neighbour. Accordingly the Protocols were in line with Turkey's then rising posturing as a regional power.

The first protocol, covering the establishment of diplomatic relations, and the second, on the further development of bilateral relations, were accompanied by an annex setting a rigorous timetable for the implementation of both. The texts of Protocols were masterpieces of diplomatic language as they were very carefully omitting the contentious points (genocide for Turks and Karabagh for Armenians). No serious diplomat or politician in the Turkish party could reasonably have expected a retrocession of Karabagh to Azerbaijan as a result of the Protocols. Similarly, no serious diplomat or politician in the Armenian party could reasonably have expected recognition of the genocide by Turkey as a consequence of the Protocols.

But even so, by emphasising co-existence and bilateral cooperation while excluding worldwide genocide recognition calls, the Turkish party may have had hopes to prevent or neutralise such calls by "economically buying Armenia out" through the opening of the border. Nevertheless, as long as the rationale and the basis of the rapprochement remained power politics (border trade and disenclavement against dropping genocide claims and solving Karabagh), the sustainability of the deal was questionable.

On 12 January 2010, the decision by the Armenian Constitutional Court regarding the constitutionality of Protocols further complicated the ratification process. Referring to an intergovernmental body ("history sub-commission") mentioned in the Protocols, the Court ruled that, with reference to article 11 of the Declaration on Independence of 23 August 1990 (The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia) naming such body was unconstitutional. In the fifth paragraph the Court rules that the Protocols "cannot be interpreted or applied" in a way that would contradict the provisions of the preamble to Constitution's preamble and the requirements of article 11.

After all, that was an unnecessary move as it named the unnamed. Indeed, there was unease on the Armenian side regarding the history sub-commission. In particular, some in the diaspora vehemently opposed it. However, as an intergovernmental body gathering "denialists" versus "genocide experts" the sub-commission could not have hold more than one meeting!

On the other side of the border, the Karabagh issue has sneaked in. So much that to satisfy an unhappy Azerbaijan with the idea of normal relations between Armenia and Turkey, Turkish Prime Minister during his May 2009 visit to Baku right after the Protocols were made public in April, openly announced before President Aliyev that he and his country would stand up for Karabagh.

Neither Minister Davutoğlu nor the bureaucrats in charge of the negotiations had been aware of Erdoğan's designs. However, the Turkish architect of the Protocols Davutoğlu, instead of offsetting the blunder repeated the same Karabagh condition in Baku later on. At the time, there was an understanding in Ankara, although never publicly declared, that under the auspices of Moscow Azerbaijan and Armenia were about to close a deal on Karabagh and the Turkish-Armenian normalisation could go in parallel.

Despite pros and cons, despite overt and covert intentions, in the final tally, Turkey's superior energy needs and the overwhelming nationalist rhetoric forced it to choose Azerbaijan and to revert to its orthodox Armenia policy over normalising relations with Armenia. So came to a grinding close Turkey's first innovative Armenia policy before it had even begun.

The author of the most comprehensive book so far on the subject, Diplomatic History: The Turkey-Armenia Protocols, David L. Phillips from Columbia University argued in a Carnegie-sponsored round table that there was a view on both sides that the other party would never go forward and the parliamentary ratification requirement provided a political cover for both Turkish and Armenian officials.

Today, the Protocols could be considered as frozen to death. However, according to the Turkish Ambassador to the EU, the Protocols are still on the table.

2. THE INEXORABLE AZERI FACTOR

Before the signature of Protocols, Azerbaijan was demanding that the solution of the Karabagh stalemate be clearly mentioned in the texts. Following the signature on 10 October 2009 and despite Erdoğan's assurances, the Azeri factor emerged compellingly on the Turkish political and public scenes. This indicates that the Turkish government did not properly inform the Azeris regarding the talks in Switzerland. Nevertheless, the Azeri factor was crucial in the collapse of the normalisation process. Today it is determinant in Turkey's Armenia and Armenian policy overall.

Over the past two decades, starting right after the end of the Cold War, Turkey has shown an interest vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. In April 1993, when the Armenian army took Kelbajar, an Azeri land, to ensure the security of the occupied Karabagh, Turkey both stopped the talks on the establishment of diplomatic relations and closed unilaterally its land border with Armenia. Further on, in 1996, it ratified a Treaty on Bilateral Military Cooperation.

During the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party) since 2002, the relations have been cordial but the two leaders, the successful representative of political Islam Erdoğan and the Soviet-model secularist Aliyev didn't necessarily get well together. The turning point was undoubtedly the Protocols process, during and after which Azerbaijan and Turkey have seen their various national interests suddenly matching.

PR activities by Azeri officials have become visible and audible during the Protocols process, carefully organised by the Azeri diplomats both in Ankara and Kars. The consulate in the latter city monitors all activities at the border areas and takes measures to counter attempts, for instance in favour of an open border with Armenia or for the establishment of a direct flight between Van and Yerevan. The Azeri MP and member of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Ganira Pashayeva is another key figure of PR/PI activities in Turkey and elsewhere.

After the collapse of the Protocols, standing up for Karabagh took on speed and reached out to Turkish public opinion. This was despite the fact that most Turkish people could not even spot Azerbaijan, let alone Karabagh, on a map.

The climax was the 26 February 2012 rally in Istanbul's Taksim Square to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Khodjali massacres in Karabagh. Everything was duly orchestrated. Prior to the demonstration, the Turkish Interior Minister paid a visit to Baku where he met Aliyev. On the following Friday, there was a sermon to commemorate Khodjali in Turkey's mosques. Hate speeches against Armenians and non-Muslims marked the gathering. With the Turkish Prime Minister endorsing the rally, it seemed that Turkey's traditional, century-old Armenian "non-policy" was stronger than ever. And in the meantime, Turkey appeared as though it has subcontracted its policy towards Armenia as well as Armenians to Azerbaijan.

The involvement of Azeri power circles looks pretty palpable when invectives are hurled from Baku at Turkish columnists who point out the damaging road Turkish government has begun to take. Writing on the 26 February rally in the www.1news.az, apparently a mouthpiece of the regime, Erestun Habibbeyli utters: "No one should dare to blacken the rally against the Khodjali Genocide in Taksim. People who found right those who betrayed the Turkish state 100 years ago, do not shirk away from bending the truth when it comes to a massacre which took place just 20 years ago right before their eyes.... The Turkish Parliament should not stop at the declaration of its speaker, it should give its opinion on the massacre of civilians in Khodjali and recognise the genocide....It is important to keep the Khodjali events alive, to let the world know of Armenian murders, the crimes they have committed, and just how hypocritical they are."

This looks like a new road map for Turkey towards the centenary of the Armenian genocide in 2015. Today the Azeri and Turkish diasporas, especially in the US, are collaborating to develop a counter-strategy for 2015. Their activities in Europe are not that visible. One noticeable event was the unsuccessful motion of Mehmet Kaplan, a Swedish Green MP of Turkish origin, who in May 2012 demanded the immediate retreat of Armenian forces from the occupied territories.

Next to Azeri PR/PI activities and joint lobbying, the most tangible cooperation takes place in the economic sphere. Bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey has now reached strategic dimensions with the building of TANAP (the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline) which is seen by oil and gas experts as a patent alternative to EU-sponsored Nabucco. Moreover, Baku is heavily investing in refining and petrochemical facilities thanks to the takeover of Turkish colossus PETKIM by the State oil company of Azerbaijan SOCAR. Vagif Aliyev, Chairman of PETKIM, recently announced that its investments in Turkey will amount to 17 billion dollars until 2017 and that they were aiming at becoming the third biggest company of Turkey. The company is assertively entering in joint ventures with Turkish groups close to AKP and buying industries as diverse as TV broadcasting and newspapers (STAR Group).

One must recall that Turkey, with its unlimited energy needs, has found in Azerbaijan a precious associate that will be very difficult to dissociate with in a foreseeable future, at the expense of a normalisation with Armenia as well as dealing with the taboo of genocide.

3. THE OTHER PLAYERS INVOLVED

Several countries and institutions are directly or indirectly involved in the Turkish-Armenian relations, first and foremost Russia which is the master of the Caucasian sub-region and very influential in Armenia. Russian assertiveness in the Caucasus, where Turkey has never been a regional actor, neither now under the AKP government, nor under any previous governments, is a given fact and Turkey has

no proper policy tool to deal with it. Armenia (or Karabagh) is not an item on Turkey-Russia cooperation agenda. Thus if Turkey wants to become a decent player in the Caucasus and lay the foundations of a normalisation process with Armenia, it needs to open its border unilaterally.

During the seminar that took place at the European Parliament, the weight of Russia in the sub-region and in particular over Armenia was strongly stressed. The recent blow to the fate of the “Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area” between the EU and Armenia was understood as the result of the Russian influence over the country. It was also assessed as an obstacle to the diversification of Armenia’s foreign policy options.

Iran is another actor of the sub-region which entertains good neighbourly relations with Armenia and rather tense relations with both Azerbaijan and Turkey for different reasons. It has always been Iran’s policy to spot Turkey out of the sub-region and to preserve the status quo on Karabagh.

The U.S and the EU are distant players which have obvious bias vis-à-vis Turkey over the genocide question and only secondary influence over Armenia despite substantial diasporan ties and aid programmes.

4. TURKISH DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Although a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement through the Protocols would have smoothed the anti-Turkey positions throughout the world deriving from the denial of the Armenian genocide, Turkish domestic politics, the political interests of the ruling party and that of Prime Minister Erdoğan who is embarked in a vital electoral course, have prevailed and should continue to prevail in the years to come. The Azeri factor is an integral part of this policy line which has dropped off the political agenda the normalisation process with Armenia. Quite to the contrary, the Turkish government is now showing signs in the other direction.

Thanks to its recent economic and diplomatic visibility, Turkey increasingly seems to be an over-confident country. The reason behind the incapacity of imagining policies other than the classical ones is blindness triggered by overconfidence. But the direction things are taking regarding the Armenian question does not augur well. Just recall some events: Threat of the Prime Minister to expel 100,000 (sic) Armenian illegal workers during a BBC interview; murder of the soldier of Armenian origin Sevag Balıkcı on 24 April 2011 the very day of Armenian genocide remembrance; the outrageous verdict which absolves the behind-the-scene instigators of the assassination of Turkish journalist of Armenian origin Hrant Dink; mostly unrevealed attacks against elderly Armenians; “celebrations” following the French Constitutional Court decision regarding the criminalisation of the denial of Armenian genocide in France; the 26 February 2012 Khodjali demonstration in Istanbul; active preparations for 2015 to make it the Centenary of Dardanelles with reference to a WWI battle and as a substitute to the centenary of the genocide.

Along the same line, it is highly difficult to detect the slightest initiative within the state and political elite towards the recognition of the genocide. With the exception of a chronic fear to see a U.S President to utter the word genocide in the traditional 24 April speech, the Turkish lawmakers have no other apprehension regarding the status quo on Armenia and Armenians, accepting thereby the risks of being pinpointed again and this time in a universal manner in 2015.

One exception could have been the President Abdullah Gül, the actor of the so-called football diplomacy. Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian invited him to the World Cup eliminatory match

between the two teams in Yerevan in 2008, which Gül accepted. Further on he has occasionally shown his regret for the collapsed Protocols and ruined efforts.

5. ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

Contrary to the state and the bureaucracy, the society is a natural actor of the policies of memory. In order to be perennial, substantial and coherent, policies of memory need societal dynamics, whatever the capacity of the society to influence the lawmaker is. In the Turkish case this assertion is even more tangible.

For three reasons: first, a society cannot be healed so to recover its memory by the very actor, the state of the Republic of Turkey that precisely lobotomised it. Secondly, large chunks of Ottoman and later Turkish elites have happily adhered to the de-memorisation works proposed by the official denialists narrative in order to justify the massive seizure of property and wealth as well as to excuse the ethnic cleansing of Armenians for “holy national interests”. And thirdly, a review of societal sub-consciousness needs to be anchored in the very core of society to bear any value, and by symmetry not dictated by the cold and selfish interests of a state.

Thus, even slow, lengthy and understandably forcing the limits of one’s patience waiting for a due recognition of century-old crimes committed during Ottoman era, the development of policies of memory, growing out of a painstaking yet convulsive societal recollection remains an healthy and perennial endeavour. In Turkey although the ‘State Highway’ is as much obstructed by structural roadblocks the road for civil activism is largely clear.

The civil interaction between Armenians not only from Armenia and citizens of Turkey is continuing unabated since years. Artists, journalists, workers (12,000 according to latest researches but some from Armenian populated Javakheti in Georgia), women’s associations, sportsmen, scholars, businessman local authorities and tourists travel in both directions. Air connections exist since 1995.

In Turkey, there is a growing awareness regarding the bad as well as the good memory. Public actions, perhaps not so numerous, but certainly momentous, are building up at all levels. Supported by the authorities from time to time, they primarily rely on voluntary citizens’ initiatives. These memory works take place in four major areas: Academia and publishing; Individual and collective memory search; Public awareness and visibility; Religious and cultural discovery (a non-exhaustive list is attached).

The genies are out of the bottle; when and how they will affect state policy is difficult to predict. But in any case the civilian activism and awareness remains the sole sustainable asset ahead of any normalisation of relations.

6. CONCLUSION

Turkey has rediscovered its eastern neighbour with the collapse of the Soviet system as no relations existed before early 1990ies. Opportunities to normalise relations by way of establishing diplomatic relations and recognising the border have been dead-borne as a result of the Azeri-Armenian war on Karabagh, Turkey obviously taking side with its kin, Azerbaijan and closing unilaterally its border with Armenia.

Over ten years passed before secret bilateral talks start under the auspices of the Swiss government to give another try to the normalisation of relations. At the end two Protocols come to fruition by 2009 and

were signed in Zürich in October the same year. The first Protocol, covering the establishment of diplomatic relations, and the second, on the further development of bilateral relations, were accompanied by an annex setting a rigorous timetable for the implementation of both. The texts of Protocols were masterpieces of diplomatic language as they were omitting very carefully the contentious points (genocide for Turks and Karabagh for Armenians).

However and despite the diplomatic language, the ratification process in both legislatures has proven to be more complicated than the signing process precisely because of the contentious points.

As for Turkey, the hesitations of the Armenian Parliament regarding the wording pertaining to the issue of genocide (setting up of a history sub-commission to discuss the events of 1915) and the pressure put by the Azeri government on Turkey to link the normalisation of relations to the solution of Karabagh conflict, have been ample reasons to delay and finally report *sine die* the ratification of Protocols.

Today the Protocols could be considered as frozen to death as far as Turkey is concerned while Turkey's first innovative Armenia policy came to a sour end before it had even begun.

After the collapse of the Protocols the Azeri factor over Turkey's Armenia as well as Armenian policy has become more and more visible, Turkey's chronic energy needs making it vulnerable to the Azeri factor. Moreover a newcomer in the Caucasus region where the major player, Russia's omnipresence is difficult to challenge Turkey has had another reason to drop off the agenda the normalisation with Armenia. Last not least, the domestic political circumstances oblige the ruling AKP to pay attention to nationalist voters, which in turn pushes back the priority of normalising relations with a country which is widely considered unfriendly by the majority of the population.

Today, by deprioritising its normalisation with Armenia the Turkish government gives the impression of risking being finger pointed by the international community as regards the upcoming centenary of Armenian genocide in 2015. Quite to the contrary recent developments give the impression that the country is reverting to its old policy line under the weight of the Azeri factor.

Under these rather bleak conditions the normalisation efforts remain under the sole responsibility of Track II activities involving both civil societies as well as diaspora Armenians. Valuable initiatives continue to take place under the auspices of civilian segments to challenge the taboos, discover each other, and explore ways of cooperating on concrete issues of common concern. As the most tangible asset before the normalisation of relations these joint initiatives need to be supported by the international community.

PART II: PAPER BY RICHARD GIRAGOSIAN - ARMENIAN EXPERT

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Although the South Caucasus region still faces a daunting set of obstacles in terms of reform and democratisation, and regional stability, the diplomatic breakthrough between Armenia and Turkey represents one of the few positive trends in the region in recent years, and holds promise for the onset of a new period of regional stability. Since the historic, first-ever reciprocal visits of the Armenia and Turkish presidents to each country in what became known as “football diplomacy,” the once promising “normalisation” process has dramatically stalled. Although capped by the signing of two groundbreaking diplomatic protocols¹ by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers in October 2009, official state-level engagement remains suspended, with each side retreating to their previously hard-line positions. Yet against this backdrop, there are renewed signs of optimism. And just as significant, there is also a new opportunity for restarting diplomacy and fulfilling expectations for a normalisation of relations.

More specifically, this optimism stems from developments in both Armenia and Turkey. For Armenia, the second and final term in office of President Serzh Sarkisian has triggered the start of a new dynamic political transition. But this offers a fresh opportunity for the president to display a greater degree of political will, to garner greater political legitimacy, and to craft his own personal legacy. Secondly, after missing an opportunity to forge closer ties to Europe,² the imperative to re-open the Armenian-Turkish border and normalize relations is an even more pressing priority for Armenia. The imperative stems from the necessity for Armenia to overcome the threats of isolation and insignificance, an especially critical consideration for a landlocked country like Armenia, limited by its small size in terms of both demography and territory. Moreover, renewed diplomatic engagement with Turkey also offers the Armenian government with an important and useful way to repair the damage and regain legitimacy from its belated decision to commit to joining the Russian-led Customs Union. That one decision, reached in a unilateral move by the Armenian president during a meeting with his Russian counterpart in Moscow on 3 September effectively derailed and dashed nearly four years of negotiations over an Association Agreement with the European Union. But a resumption of the “normalisation” process with Turkey could provide Armenia with an important course correction to that stark and surprising “u-turn” in policy. Thus, from a broader strategic perspective, for Armenia, normalizing relations with neighbouring Turkey is essential to overcome the threat of isolation, constraints of closed borders, the collapse of regional trade and transport, and to end its exclusion from regional development projects.

For Turkey, a return to diplomatic engagement with Armenia is now accepted as a crucial step to meet broader Turkish strategic aspirations of becoming more of a regional player. And on a deeper level, Turkey is also driven by its perception of mounting pressure over the Armenian genocide, as momentum builds toward 2015, the 100th anniversary of the genocide, representing another incentive for Turkey to “restart” its engagement of Armenia. Moreover, there is also a new opportunity for leveraging this opening by implementing new, innovative ideas and creative incentives capable of encouraging and empowering Armenia and Turkey to reengage and resume their bid to normalise relations. Yet even in light of such renewed optimism, the outlook for Armenian-Turkish normalisation

¹ For the full text of the “protocols,” see the Addendum section of this report.

² Armenia’s planned “initialling” of an Association Agreement and the related Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement with the European Union (EU) was superseded by the sudden 3 September 2013 decision by the Armenian president to commit Armenia to joining the Russian-led Customs Union. That move effectively ended any hope for concluding the Association Agreement and the DCFTA, as Armenia would be precluded by virtue of its membership in the rival Customs Union.

remains largely dependent on Turkey. And as both perception and policy in Armenia is now steadfast in waiting for Turkey to make a first move, there is a need to rearticulate the shared benefits of normalising relations and re-opening the closed border.

1. PROTOCOLS & PROCESS

Given both the earlier political complications and current suspension of the “protocols,” the focus is now on implementing the terms of the protocols themselves, in a more modest and realistic approach, while avoiding any need for parliamentary adoption of the protocols themselves.³

More specifically, the aim is to implement two key elements of the protocols: establishing diplomatic relations and opening two border crossing points, with one for commercial traffic and cargo, and a second for tourists and visitors. In a wider policy context, the lack of any clear or immediate success in Turkish foreign policy may also encourage Turkey to reengage Armenia, with normalisation offering a more immediate gain, without the long-term investment and political capital required in overcoming the more complex challenges to Turkish foreign policy. Moreover, just as the outlook for normalisation largely depends on strategic calculations in Ankara, the Turkish side may actually consider a return to the stalled normalisation process sooner than expected. Such a scenario stems from the fact that as the launch of the initial Swiss-mediated secret diplomatic talks between Armenia and Turkey was based on a Turkish reassessment of its strategic national interests, the scale and scope of challenges facing Turkish foreign policy today may trigger yet another reappraisal.

Such a reappraisal of Turkish foreign policy stems from the daunting and complex longer term obstacles facing Turkey, as evident in recent developments in neighbouring Syria, over the Iranian nuclear programme and from the heated confrontation between Turkey and Israel, for only some examples. These foreign policy challenges, which many in Turkey criticise as an overly ambitious bid to project Turkish power and influence, have also emerged as an underlying cause of dissent driving the recent wave of demonstrations against the Turkish government that erupted in the summer of 2013. In addition, the suspension of the normalisation process has also damaged Turkey’s proclaimed strategic policy of seeking “zero problems” with its neighbours. Seen as a failure, the breakdown in normalization has also damaged Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, posing new doubts over his political vision and even his personal sincerity. Yet of course, any such return to the normalisation process will not be that easy and not without its own unresolved challenges, inferring a more sophisticated Turkish policy of sincerely engaging Armenia, facing the genocide issue more honestly and openly, and recognising the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is no longer a direct precondition to normalising relations with Armenia. But given the “win-win” nature of Armenian-Turkish normalisation, Ankara may be able to garner a key foreign policy achievement that has so far eluded Turkey.

³ This strategy was outlined in a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara on 24 July 2011. This new approach was also endorsed in a meeting with both President Abdullah Gul and Foreign Minister Davutoglu, on the sidelines of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) 20th Anniversary Summit in Istanbul on 25 June 2012. For more, see: Kart, Emine, [“Davutoğlu’s gesture raises hopes for track-two diplomacy with Armenia,”](#) Today’s Zaman, 24 July 2011.

2. PRACTICAL GOALS

Since Turkey closed its border with Armenia in April 1993, the issue has been a major driver shaping Armenian national security. Even more than the closed border with Azerbaijan, the lack of diplomatic relations and the closure of the border with Turkey only deepened an already seriously entrenched degree of threat misperception within Armenia, which has fostered an exaggerated fear of a “threat from Turkey.”

The decision by Turkey to close its border with Armenia came as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Although the initial impact was severe, resulting in a shortage of foodstuffs and basic commodities, and an abrupt and severe energy crisis, Armenia was able to quickly adapt, although its sole external trade link northward through Georgia fostered a degree of dependence that was exploited by the Georgians as transit and tariff fees quickly exceeded normal market rates, and only pushed Armenia to expand its second external trade route, consisting of a small border crossing point southward through Iran.

Overall, the closed Turkish border with Armenia has long surpassed its utility as a coercive measure to induce concession or compromise. Not only was Armenia able to adapt, it has achieved impressive rates of economic growth. But in many ways, the effect was to only unify the Armenian population around a “siege mentality” that has also empowered more militant and hard-line positions within the Armenian political discourse. From this perspective, Turkey’s recalculation of its national interests, favouring open borders and diplomatic relations, represents a prudent correction of a failed policy.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN “AGENT OF CHANGE”

In the wake of the suspension of official Armenian-Turkish diplomacy, there is still a degree of hope for a breakthrough in the normalisation process, however, for two reasons. First, the Armenian position of “no preconditions” toward Turkey has encouraged the normally hesitant Turkish side to move much closer toward normalising relations with Armenia and modifying its past policy of isolating or “punishing” Armenia. And generally, the Armenian policy of “no preconditions” has only helped to reassure Turkey that its policy correction was both prudent and productive.

Yet despite the absence of official diplomacy, the normalisation process between the two countries now remains limited to civil society exchanges and “track two” efforts at dialogue and citizen diplomacy. While these efforts are important in seeking to “sustain the momentum” until the two sides can diplomatically reengage, civil society actors on both sides need to be more empowered in order to meet their potential for becoming true “agent of change.” It is that role as an agent of change that is especially crucial to meet two specific goals: first, to sustain the momentum of normalisation by forging and deepening ties between civil society organisations in both countries, while seeking to shape the political context to foster a resumption of official Armenian-Turkish diplomacy; and second, to broaden the constituency for Armenian-Turkish normalisation, both in terms of geography, by going beyond the capitals and the usual cities to engage border regions and more rural areas of each country, and in terms of issues, by reaching out to other specific niche groups (energy, trade & commerce, culture, etc.).

4. THE BROADER CONTEXT

There is also an important broader regional context to the issue of “normalisation,” which is defined by a strategy to address more fundamental challenges facing Turkey, including the Kurdish and Cyprus issues and to meet the imperative for significantly deeper reforms within Turkey. Thus, normalising relations with Armenia also stands a key test of Turkey’s strategic future and as an indicator in the bid for EU ascension. Moreover, for Turkey, opening its closed border with Armenia would constitute a new strategic opportunity for galvanising economic activity in the impoverished eastern regions of the country, which could play a key role in the economic stabilisation of the already restive Kurdish-populated eastern regions and thus meet a significant national security imperative of countering the root causes of Kurdish terrorism and separatism with economic opportunity.

5. THE ECONOMIC INCENTIVE FOR NORMALISATION

Likewise, an open border with Turkey would offer Armenia a way to overcome its regional isolation and marginalisation, to access larger markets, and to benefit from lower transit costs. In addition, the commercial and economic activity resulting from an open border would foster subsequent trade ties that, in turn, would lead to more formal cooperation, such as in the areas of customs and border security, for example. And with such a possible deepening of bilateral trade ties and cross-border cooperation, the establishment of diplomatic relations would undoubtedly follow. In this way, the opening of the closed Armenian-Turkish border could not only bring about a crucial breakthrough in fostering trade links and economic relations, but may also serve as an impetus to bolster broader stability and security throughout the conflict-prone South Caucasus. And the benefits would also be evident in the related improvement to Armenia’s infrastructure, making the country’s roads, railways, and airports even more essential as trade and transport routes. More interestingly, however, the possible opening of the border would also introduce a new healthy degree of market-driven competition that could bolster the reform of the country’s closed political and economic systems.

6. THE KURDISH ISSUE: A TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY ARGUMENT

One of the more ironic aspects of the win-win nature of benefits from normalisation between Turkey and Armenia is the national security argument, which is based on the recognition that the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border offers essential economic support for the recent Turkish government initiated peace agreement the Kurdish Workers’ Party, or PKK. It also offers an important element of broader trade, economic activity and jobs in order to combat Islamist extremism in the restive Kurdish regions of Turkey. Within a broader context, the Armenian issue has traditionally been seen as a threatening element in the deeper debate over Turkish identity, and the Turkish military has tended to be the most vocal and strident opponent whenever the Armenian issue was raised. And although Turkey remains critically sensitive to Armenian attempts to pursue international recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide, there has been a recent trend within the military and security sector, or so-called “deep state” within Turkey, toward recognising both the necessity and the benefits of normalising relations with Armenia.

For Turkey, however, the potential advantage of opening its border with Armenia is rooted not simply in the benefits of trade and new markets, but centres on the economic aspects of Turkish national security. And some within the Turkish military now see the border issue quite differently and may even

support such a move to re-open the border as an effective measure to stabilize the restive Kurdish region in eastern Turkey and to bolster the peace process with the Kurds. In terms of Turkish security and longer term stability, the impoverished and remote Kurdish regions of Eastern Turkey pose a formidable challenge for the Turkish military. The most productive strategy in dealing with this threat is one of stabilisation, through economic development. And as these Kurdish regions would be the first to benefit from border trade with neighbouring Armenia, the reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border offers the only real key to stability and security.

Such an economic view of Turkish national security is also essential to ensuring a more comprehensive approach to containing and combating support for extremism.

7. DOMESTIC DRIVERS: THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Clearly, one of the most visible driving forces behind the Turkish commitment to the normalisation effort has centred on the broader scale and scope of internal democratic change within Turkey. Democratisation has assumed an even deeper context in recent years, surpassing even the most ambitious expectations by attaining a new-found intensity that includes tackling such politically sensitive and “taboo” issues such as the Kurdish and Armenian questions, as well as the status of gender and other minorities in today’s Turkey. Moreover, democratisation for the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has also addressed more fundamental questions, including the very meaning of Turkish identity and the role of Islam within the Turkish society and state. The degree of internal change has also been matched by an equally dynamic readjustment to Turkey’s strategic orientation.⁴

At the same time, the normalisation of Turkish-Armenian relations also represents a strategic opportunity that Turkey may be in danger of missing, especially given a recent flurry of diplomatic threats and political posturing aimed at reassuring the nationalist camps both within Turkey and Azerbaijan. But the issue of normalisation must also be seen in the proper perspective, as any move by Turkey to reopen the border and extend diplomatic relations with Armenia represents only the bare minimum expectation. In this way, even with a successful normalisation of relations, such an achievement would only be a first step toward the more complex process of reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey.

8. CONCLUSION

After a long period of Swiss-mediated diplomacy between Armenia and Turkey, the launch of new direct diplomacy resulted in two concrete achievements: first, the historic, first-ever reciprocal visits of the presidents of Armenia and Turkey to each other’s country and, second, the signing of two diplomatic “protocols” by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers in Zurich in October 2009. The two protocols, addressing the twin issues of establishing diplomatic relations and reopening the closed Armenian-Turkish border, offered a strategic roadmap for each country to “normalise” relations as a first step toward the broader process of reconciliation.

Since the signing of the protocols, however, the “normalisation” process has dramatically stalled, with official state-level engagement suspended. During this period, despite several new opportunities for

⁴ For more on the scale and scope of change within Turkey, see: Giragosian, Richard, “Redefining Turkey’s Strategic Orientation,” *Turkish Policy Quarterly* (TPQ), Volume 6, Number 4, Winter 2007.

reengagement or reactivity, each side has retreated to their previously hard-line positions. Yet against this backdrop, there are renewed signs of optimism and a looming opportunity for restarting diplomacy and fulfilling the earlier expectations of a normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey.

The current strategy is to avoid earlier obstacles and correct mistakes, and overcome the deadlock. More specifically, the focus is now on seeking to restore diplomatic engagement above and beyond the “protocols,” by implementing the terms of the protocols themselves, in a more modest and realistic approach, while avoiding any need for parliamentary adoption of the protocols themselves.

The policy aim is to implement two key elements of the protocols: establishing diplomatic relations and opening two border crossing points, with one for commercial traffic and cargo, and a second for tourists and visitors.

This strategy can be bolstered in several ways. First, the Armenian position of “no preconditions” toward Turkey has encouraged the normally hesitant Turkish side to move much closer toward normalising relations with Armenia and modifying its past policy of isolating or “punishing” Armenia. And generally, the Armenian policy of “no preconditions” has only helped to reassure Turkey that its policy correction was both prudent and productive.

Second, despite the absence of official diplomacy, the normalisation process between the two countries now remains limited to civil society exchanges and “track two” efforts at dialogue and citizen diplomacy. While these efforts are important in seeking to “sustain the momentum” until the two sides can diplomatically reengage, civil society actors on both sides need to be more empowered in order to meet their potential for becoming true “agent of change.” It is that role as an agent of change that is especially crucial to meet two specific goals: first, to sustain the momentum of normalisation by forging and deepening ties between civil society organisations in both countries, while seeking to shape the political context to foster a resumption of official Armenian-Turkish diplomacy; and second, to broaden the constituency for Armenian-Turkish normalisation, both in terms of geography, by going beyond the capitals and the usual cities to engage border regions and more rural areas of each country, and in terms of issues, by reaching out to other specific niche groups (energy, trade & commerce, culture, etc.).

And third, it represents a policy correction, whereby the closed border failed to induce concession or compromise from Armenia and only empowered more militant and hard-line positions within Armenian political discourse.

The renewed optimism is also evident in the wider policy context, due to three key factors. First, the need for more immediate success in Turkish foreign policy may also encourage Turkey to reengage Armenia, with normalisation offering a tangible victory. Second, a restart to the normalization process would rebuild and even rescue Turkey’s beleaguered foreign policy of “zero problems” with its neighbours. And that would be an important vindication for Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Third, in light of the pressure over the genocide issue, as the 100th anniversary looms, a Turkish policy of sincerely re-engaging Armenia may be an important and attractive policy option for Ankara.

PART III: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the present lack of state-level diplomatic engagement, there are several areas for developing deeper relations between Turkey and Armenia, based both on earlier achievements and current opportunities. Although these recommendations cover a wide range of areas, from trade and tourism to politics and security, the following is a set of four specific areas of policy recommendations with a focus on practical steps and measures for consideration:

I. Economics, Trade & Transport

- Form a bilateral Turkey-Armenia Chamber of Commerce, or “TRAMCHAM,” to facilitate trade contacts and business networking;
- Adopt a strategy focusing on specific niche market potential, including IT sector projects;
- Forge cooperation and collaboration in the development of the transport sector: such as air cargo capacity using existing charter airline flights, the development of cross-border road and railway links, and for the coordination of standards for public transport/tourism;
- Leverage existing tourism potential, which can include the establishment of a Turkish Airlines office in Armenia, catering to a new market, develop cooperation between tourism operators, and expand regional links to eastern Turkey;
- Focus on the earlier interested in the energy sector, as demonstrated by the earlier memorandum of understanding on Armenian exports of surplus electricity, and form ministry-level working groups devoted to nuclear energy security and safety, etc.

II. Political Cooperation

- Utilise new avenues and venues, where both countries do have “unofficial” diplomatic relations, based on interaction within international organizations and institutions, such as through the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC), NATO, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe, among others. Such informal contacts and diplomatic interaction between government officials should be strengthened in order to encourage and better prepare for the subsequent return to more official diplomatic engagement;
- The Minsk Group’s composition under the auspices of the OSCE, the protracted negotiator of the protracted Karabagh dispute in which Turkey has a minor role, could be revised so as to include Turkey.;
- Pursue efforts to forge new areas for cooperation between the parliaments and regional governments in each country.

III. National Security

- Counter-terrorism coordination and information and intelligence sharing, especially regarding the shared threat from the PKK;
- Border security incident prevention (such as the August 2013 shooting of a Turkish shepherd by border guards on the Armenian side);
- Emergency response, seismic monitoring and natural disaster preparation and exercises.

IV. People-to-people contacts and cooperation

- Initiatives and projects aiming at the opening of the border should be supported;
- Interim arrangements and measures can be taken by parties through existing rare cooperation schemes such as BSCE or bilaterally by upgrading new crossing points;
- The civilian initiatives involving Armenians, Turks, Kurds and others should be actively supported by the international community; a good practice is the recent EU-sponsored project involving 8 NGOs from Armenia and Turkey, under the Instrument for Stability. In a possible second phase the scope of the project could be extended to cover Azeri civil society organisations.

PART IV: BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ANNEXES

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ANNEX I: PROTOCOL ON DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia,

Guided by the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia signed on the same day,

Considering the perspectives of developing their bilateral relations, based on confidence and respect to their mutual interests,

Determining to develop and enhance their bilateral relations, in the political, economic, energy, transport, scientific, technical, cultural issues and other fields, based on common interests of both countries,

Supporting the promotion of the cooperation between the two countries in the international and regional organisations, especially within the framework of the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the BSEC,

Taking into account the common purpose of both States to cooperate for enhancing regional stability and security for ensuring the democratic and sustainable development of the region,

Reiterating their commitment to the peaceful settlement of regional and international disputes and conflicts on the basis of the norms and principles of international law,

Reaffirming their readiness to actively support the actions of the international community in addressing common security threats to the region and world security and stability, such as terrorism, transnational organised crimes, illicit trafficking of drugs and arms,

1. Agree to open the common border within 2 months after the entry into force of this Protocol,

2. Agree to

- conduct regular political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries;
- implement a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations;
- make the best possible use of existing transport, communications and energy infrastructure and
- networks between the two countries, and to undertake measures in this regard;
- develop the bilateral legal framework in order to foster cooperation between the two countries;
- cooperate in the fields of science and education by encouraging relations between the appropriate
- institutions as well as promoting the exchange of specialists and students, and act with the aim of
- preserving the cultural heritage of both sides and launching common cultural projects;
- establish consular cooperation in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963 in order to provide necessary assistance and protection to the citizens of the two countries;

- take concrete measures in order to develop trade, tourism and economic cooperation between the two countries; engage in a dialogue and reinforce their cooperation on environmental issues.

3. Agree on the establishment of an intergovernmental bilateral commission which shall comprise separate sub-commissions for the prompt implementation of the commitments mentioned in operational paragraph 2 above in this Protocol. To prepare the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions, a working group headed by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs shall be created 2 months after the day following the entry into force of this Protocol. Within 3 months after the entry into force of this Protocol, these modalities shall be approved at ministerial level. The intergovernmental commission shall meet for the first time immediately after the adoption of the said modalities. The sub-commissions shall start their work at the latest 1 month thereafter and they shall work continuously until the completion of their mandates.

Where appropriate, international experts shall take part in the sub-commissions.

The timetable and elements agreed by both sides for the implementation of this Protocol are mentioned in the annexed document, which is an integral part of this Protocol.

This Protocol and the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia shall enter into force on the same day, i.e. on the first day of the first month following the exchange of instruments of ratification.

Signed in (date, place) in Turkish, Armenian and English authentic copies in duplicate. In case of divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

ANNEX II: TIMETABLE AND ELEMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Steps to be undertaken	Timing
1. to open the common border	within 2 months after the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
2. to establish a working group headed by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs to prepare the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions	2 months after the day following the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
3. to approve the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions at ministerial level	within 3 months after the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
4. to organize the first meeting of the intergovernmental commission	immediately after the adoption of the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions at ministerial level
5. to operate the following sub-commissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the sub-commission on political consultations; - the sub-commission on transport, communications and energy infrastructure and networks; - the sub-commission on legal matters; - the sub-commission on science and education; - the sub-commission on trade, tourism and economic cooperation; - the sub-commission on environmental issues; and - the sub-commission on the historical dimension to implement a dialogue with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations, in which Turkish, Armenian as well as Swiss and other international experts shall take part. 	at the latest 1 month after the first meeting of the intergovernmental commission

ANNEX III: PROTOCOL ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

The Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey.

Desiring to establish good neighbourly relations and to develop bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and other fields for the benefit of their peoples, as envisaged in the Protocol on the development of relations signed on the same day.

Referring to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe,

Reconfirming their commitment, in their bilateral and international relations, to respect and ensure respect for the principles of equality, sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs of other states, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers,

Bearing in mind the importance of the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere of trust and confidence between the two countries that will contribute to the strengthening of peace, security and stability of the whole region, as well as being determined to refrain from the threat of the use of force, to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Confirming the mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries as defined relevant treaties of international law,

Emphasising their decisions to open the common border,

Reiterating their commitment to refrain from pursuing any policy incompatible with the spirit of good neighbourly relations,

Condemning all forms of terrorism, violence and extremism irrespective of their cause, pledging to refrain from encouraging and tolerating such acts and to cooperate against them,

Affirming their willingness to chart a new pattern and course for their relations on the basis of common interests, goodwill and in pursuit of peace, mutual understanding and harmony,

Agree to establish diplomatic relations as of the date of the entry into force of this Protocol accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and to exchange Diplomatic Missions.

This Protocol and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey shall enter into force on the same day, i.e. on the first day of the first month following of instruments of ratification.

Signed in (place) on (date) in Armenian, Turkish and English languages authentic copies in duplicate. In case of divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

For the Republic of Armenia for the Republic of Turkey

ANNEX IV: LIST OF CIVIL INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY

Academia and publishing:

- Following pioneering publishers like Belge (1977) and Aras (1993), many publishing houses now make known works in connection with the bad memory, but also in relation to the rich cosmopolitan past of the Ottoman Empire;
- Similarly following vanguard research work by some scholars, such as Taner Akçam, more and more young scholars are now involved in historical research to revisit and challenge the “official narrative”;
- Following the landmark conference of 2005 on Ottoman Armenians held in Istanbul, research and academic meetings on Armenians, Jews, Kurds, Roums, Syriacs hold an increasingly important place in the academic landscape. One should note in particular the international conference that took place on the scene of the crime, in Kurdish land, in Diyarbakir, in November 2011, on the theme of ‘Economic and Social History of Diyarbakir and Region between 1838 and 1938’ which brought together the grandchildren of both victims and perpetrators to discuss common memory. A grand première! A similar conference on the same topic but on Syriac lands of Mardin took place in November 2012;
- An increasing number of university chairs is devoted to the language, history and culture of minorities;
- In February 2009 a scholar of the Armenian diaspora, Marc Nichanian, begins for the first time to teach on topics directly related to the genocide at Sabancı University in Istanbul.

Individual and collective memory search:

- Many people seek, discover or rediscover ancestors of non-Muslim origin in their families, ancestors who converted or were forced to convert or orphans whose parents and families were massacred;
- Recent work of sociologist Laurence Ritter with Max Sivaslian, *Les Restes de l'Épée* (The Remains of the Sword) Thaddée, 2012, and that of journalist Ferda Balancar, *The Sounds of Silence* (two volumes), Hrant Dink Foundation Publications, 2012, evoke the survivors of the genocide, those crypto-Armenians of Anatolia who discover or uncover their Armenian identity; there were 13 books published on the topic as of early 2013;
- Many written and filmed testimonies appear on the genealogy of families and entire tribes, resurrecting the erased data.

Public awareness and visibility:

Non-Muslim minorities literally discover themselves and are ‘discovered’ by Turkish society. Here are a few examples:

- No less than seven associations of mutual aid and culture have been created since 2010 by Armenians originating from Arapgir, Burunkışla, Dersim, Malatya, Sasoun, Sivas and Vakıflı. Vakıflı village is the only authentically Armenian one in Turkey, the association that bears its name was created in 2000;
- Following the public apology campaign of December 2008 regarding the massacres, public commemorations of the genocide have now started to take place on April 24 (the day of the beginning of the genocide in 1915) since 2010 in various cities, in public and outdoors. Since 2005 every year at the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the pogrom of 6/7 September 1955, which

was aimed at all non-Muslim minorities of Istanbul, meetings, commemorations and various public activities have been organized around the pogrom;

- Interaction between Armenians and Turks are taking place in increasing numbers, in Armenia, Turkey and third countries, the same holds for the Roums and Syrians;
- Public use of the word genocide, while still prohibited by law, is becoming ordinary;
- The names of the journalists who died during the arrests of prominent Istanbul Armenians on 24 April 1915 are included in the list of murdered colleagues held by the Turkish Association of Journalists;
- Academic and amateur research on the known and anonymous righteous people who saved lives during the massacres are increasing, a special History Fund is created with the Hrant Dink Foundation to support research;
- Studies on the former names of settlements that have been renamed in Turkish are launched. Names are sometimes claimed by the inhabitants themselves and restored by the public authorities. (cf. Index Anatolicus, a substantial research project that is now accessible on the Web);
- Itinerant exhibitions on the life of the Armenians and the Roums (Anatolian Greeks) in the Ottoman Empire, based on postcards of the time, are criss-crossing Anatolia. Scientific research on the works of Armenian businessman, craftsman, writers, thinkers, scientists, soldiers in Ottoman Empire is constantly hitting the library shelves. A catalogue of Armenian foundations of Istanbul is published by the Hrant Dink Foundation;
- Students from a high school in Istanbul, rather close to Islamists have decided to twin with an Armenian high school, also in Istanbul, in order to find out about Armenian identity.

Religious and cultural discovery:

- Several works for the restoration of Armenian monuments and buildings (Surp Harch of Aghtamar, Surp Giragos of Diyarbekir, Surp Krikor Lusarevitch of Kayseri, Surp Vortvots Vorodmans of Istanbul, Surp Bedros of Nizip, the Armenian Catholic and Armenian Protestant churches of Sur-Diyarbekir), as well as Roum (Agia Marina and Agia Nikola of Imroz, Kaleköy Monastery of Imroz, Taxiarchis of Cunda, *Roum* Catholic Church of Iskenderun) Jewish (Great Synagogues of Anteb and Edirne) and Syriac (Syriac Catholic Church of Iskenderun) monuments are undertaken, often by municipalities;
- Masses are now celebrated since 2010 after almost a century of interruption in worship places such as the Roum monastery of Sumela at Maçka, Trabzon (Trebizond);
- Itinerant exhibitions on Armenians and Roum architects of Istanbul travel throughout Turkey and abroad;
- A ring of abandoned fountains in Habab (Elazığ), a formerly Armenian village is restored. Initially reluctant Kurdish population of the village finally participates in the restoration works;
- For the first time an Armenian cemetery, that of Arapgir, a city with an important Armenian population before 1915, is restored;
- A brand new Armenian chapel, a first worship building since 1915 is erected in the Armenian cemetery of Malatya, a city where only a handful of Armenians remain;
- Armenian-Turkish co-productions on shared memory are multiplying, inter alia the documentary of film maker Serge Avédikian: 'Barking Island', which was awarded at the Cannes Festival in 2010;
- An international consortium supports the first meaningful restoration works at the ancient Armenian capital city of Ani in the extreme east of Turkey just by the Armenian border.

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