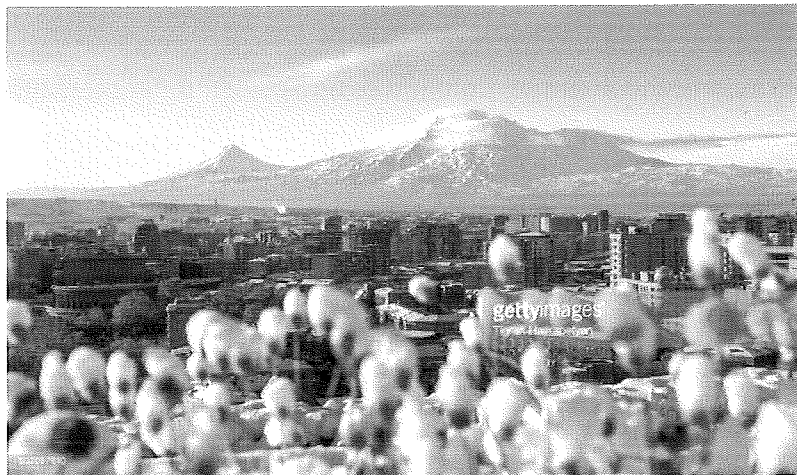
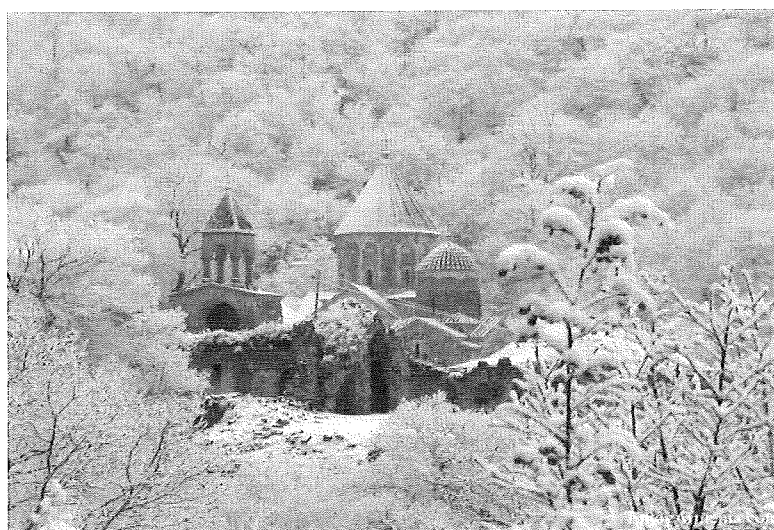


# **Fact-finding mission to Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh)**

**24- 28 January, 2018**



*Yerevan, Armenia*



*Dadivank Monastery, Artsakh*

## **Fact-finding mission to Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh)**

**24-28 January 2018**

### **24 January**

Arrival in Yerevan in the early morning and check-in at Opera Suite hotel

*11:35* Leaving for the National Assembly of Armenia

*11:45* Meeting with the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly Mr. Armen Ashotyan

*12:30* Meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Mr. Ara Babloyan

*13:30* Lunch on behalf of Mr. Armen Ashotyan

*15:00* Visit to Armenian Genocide Memorial & Museum

*16:00* Meeting with Mr. Andranik Hovhannisyan, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Gagik Ghalatchyan, head of the European department

*19:30* Dinner at "Yerevan Tavern"

### **25 January**

*9:00* Departure for Artsakh

*12:30* Stopover at Noravank monastery and "Vorskan" restaurant, Vayk

*17:00* Arrival in Stepanakert, Artsakh, check-in at Park hotel

*18:00* Meeting with Artsakh Republic/AR President Mr. Bako Sahakyan

*19:30* Meeting with AR Minister of Education, Science and Sports Ms. Narine Aghabalyan

*20:30* Dinner

### **26 January**

*10:00* Laying flowers at Stepanakert memorial of fallen soldier

*10:30* Meeting with AR Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Masis Mayilyan

*11:30* Meeting with AR Speaker of the National Assembly Mr. Ashot Ghulyan and with MPs from the Friendship Group with Europe at the National Assembly of Artsakh

*13:00* Lunch

*14:30* Departure for Shoushi

*15:00 Meeting with AR Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs Mr. Sergey Shahverdyan*

*16:00 Meeting with AR Human Rights Defender Mr. Ruben Melikyan*

*17:00 Visit to Ghazanchetsots cathedral and Shoushi Art gallery*

*18:00 Departure for Stepanakert*

*18:20 Visit TUMO Center for Creative Technologies*

*20:00 Dinner of behalf of AR Speaker of the National Assembly Mr. Ashot Ghulyan*

**27 January**

*09:30 Visit the Halo Trust NGO*

*10:30 Press-conference*

*11:00 Departure for Gandzasar monastery, stopover at "We and our mountains" monument*

*13:00 Lunch*

*14:00 Departure for Yerevan, stopover at Dadivank monastery*

*19:00 Arrival in Yerevan, check in hotel "Opera suite"*

*04:00 Departure for Zvartnots Airport*

## **The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy**



The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) is an NGO founded in 2002 in Brussels, is the interlocutor within the institutions of the European Union, as well as the Council of Europe, representing the European citizens of Armenian origin at the European institutions. EAFJD advocates, in the European Union, for the rights of the Armenian populations (in Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Samtskhe - Javakheti region in the Republic of Georgia, and in Turkey). The EAFJD assists the citizens of the Republic of Armenia in the democratization process of the country, by advocating closer EU – Armenia ties, and closer relations with different European countries and regions.

# Republic of Armenia

## Country Profile

**Area:** 29,743 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 3 026.9 (2013 census)

**Capital:** Yerevan

**Language:** Armenian

**Currency:** AMD (Armenian dram)

**Geography:** Armenia is located between the Black and Caspian Seas, the country is bordered on the North by Georgia and in the North-East by Azerbaijan. In the South-East it is bordered by Nagorno Karabakh; on the south by Iran and in the West by Turkey. The land rises to 4,090 meters (13,419 ft) above sea-level at Mount Aragats, and no point is below 390 meters (1,280 ft) above sea level. Mount Ararat, which was historically part of Armenia, is the highest mountain in the region (5,137 meters). Now located in Turkey, but clearly visible in Armenia, it is regarded by Armenians as the symbol of their land.

**Politics:** Politics of Armenia takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic. According to the Constitution of Armenia, the President is the head of government and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. In late 2015 a constitutional reform was held that passed with 66% of votes. The changes will take place during the 2017-18 electoral cycles transforming the country's system from semi-presidential to a parliamentary system.

**History:** Armenia has an ancient cultural heritage. The Satrapy of Armenia was established in the 6th century BC, after the fall of Urartu. In the first century BC the Kingdom of Armenia reached its height under Tigranes the Great. Armenia became the first state in the world to adopt Christianity as its official religion, in between late 3rd to early years of the 4th century (the official date is 301 AD), becoming the first Christian nation. Between the 16th and first half of the 19th century, the traditional Armenian homeland composed of Eastern Armenia and Western Armenia came under the rule of the rivaling Ottoman and successive Iranian Empires, passing between the two over the centuries. By the mid-19th century, Eastern Armenia had been conquered by Russia from Qajar Iran, while most of the western parts of the traditional Armenian homeland still remained under Ottoman rule. During World War I, the Armenians living in their ancestral lands in the Ottoman Empire were systematically exterminated in the Armenian

Genocide. In May 28, 1918, after the battle of Sardarapat, against the Turkish army, declared its first independence. By 1920, the state was incorporated into the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, a founding member of the Soviet Union in 1922. In 1936, the Transcaucasian state was dissolved, leaving its constituent states, including the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, as full Union republics. The modern Republic of Armenia became independent in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

**Religion:** Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion, an event traditionally dated to AD 301. According to tradition, the Armenian Church was founded by two of Jesus' twelve apostles – Thaddaeus and Bartholomew – who preached Christianity in the territory of Armenia between 40–60 AD. Because of these two founding apostles, the official name of the Armenian Church is *Armenian Apostolic Church*.

**Demographics:** Armenia has a population of 3 026.9 (2013 est.) and is the second most densely populated of the former Soviet republics. Ethnic Armenians make up 97.9% of the population.

## Sites of Interest

### Yerevan

**Territory** - 223 km<sup>2</sup> (86 sq mi)

**Population** -1, 060,138 (est. 2011)

**Density**- 4,754/km<sup>2</sup> (12,310/sq m)

**History:** The history of Yerevan dates back to the 8th century BC, with the founding of the fortress of Erebuni in 782 BC by king Argishti I. During the centuries long Iranian rule over Eastern Armenia that lasted from the early 16th century up to 1828. In 1828, the city became part of Imperial Russia alongside the rest of Eastern Armenia who conquered it from Iran through the Russo-Persian War (1826-1828). After World War I, Yerevan became the capital of the First Republic of Armenia as thousands of survivors of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire settled in the area. Following the collapse of the USSR, Yerevan became the capital of the Republic of Armenia on 21 September 1991. With the growth of the economy of the country, Yerevan has been undergoing major transformation as many parts of the city have been the recipient of new construction since the early 2000s. As of 2011, the population of Yerevan was 1,060,138, making up to 35.1% of the total population of Armenia.

### **Important sites of interest in Yerevan include:**

**Republic Square:** The early buildings (the Houses of Government, the Ministry of Communications, and the Marriott Hotel) are fine example of neo-classical architecture with Armenian hints. The buildings from later period (Art Gallery, for example) are Modernist imitations of previous ones. The History Museum of Armenia and the National Gallery are also situated here. The oval shaped square has a stone pattern in the center, meant to look like a traditional Armenian rug from above. The dancing water fountains are located at the northeastern forehead of the square in front of the National Gallery.

### **Freedom Square**

Known as Opera Square until 1991, the Freedom Square is part of the Yerevan Opera Theater complex, located just to the south of the main opera building, between the Opera Park and the Swan Lake. It gained its name "Freedom Square", as the mass demonstrations that led to the movement for the independence of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh from the USSR have started here.

**Cascades, Sculpture Park and Cafesjian Museum** is a small green zone in the immediate North of the Opera. Sculptures from Botero and other artists of international fame decorate the Park. It is a massive white stairway up a hillside of central Yerevan, decorated with green stretches, fountains and waterfalls. The museum includes the modern art works from the collection of Gerard Cafesjian, Armenian-American art collector.

### **Armenian Genocide memorial complex Tsitsernakaberd**

The Armenian Genocide memorial complex is Armenia's official memorial dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The memorial was built in 1967 on the hill of Tsitsernakaberd in Yerevan. Every year on April 24 -the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day- thousands of Armenians gather at the memorial to commemorate the victims of the Genocide.

The monument consists of a 44-meter stele symbolizing the national rebirth of the Armenian people. Along the park at the memorial there is a 100-meter wall with the names of towns and villages where massacres and deportations are known to have taken place.

In the memorial park also includes the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute.

## **Noravank**

Noravank ("new monastery") is a 13th-century Armenian monastery monastic complex that includes the church of S. Karapet, S. Grigor chapel with a vaulted hall, and the church of Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God). The fortress walls surrounding the complex were built in the 17th–18th centuries.

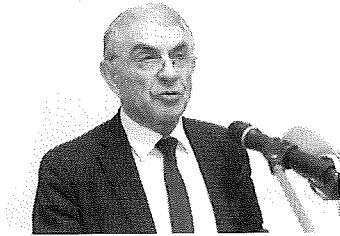
The grandest structure of Noravank is Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) church. Completed in 1339, it is a masterpiece of the talented sculptor and miniaturist Momik and his last work. There is fine relief sculpture over the entrance, depicting Christ flanked by Peter and Paul. The second church is the Surb (Saint) Karapet. The pointed tympanum of the twin window over the door is decorated with a unique relief representation of the large-headed and bearded God the Father with large almond shaped eyes blessing the Crucifix with his right hand and holding in his left hand the head of Adam, with a dove — the Holy Spirit — above it.



## **Dignitaries to meet**

### **Republic of Armenia**

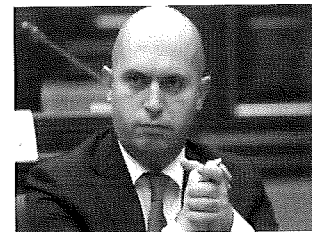
#### **Ara Babloyan, Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia**



Ara Babloyan was born on 5 May, 1947 in Yerevan. In 1971 he graduated from Yerevan State Medical University and in 1972 started to work as children's clinical hospital N1 as surgeon and urologist. In the period of 1977- 1991 Mr. Babloyan held senior posts, as head of Urology department at Yerevan's Children's Clinical hospital N3. From 1991-1997 he held the post of the Minister of Health Care of Armenia. In 2003 Mr. Babloyan founded Arabkir Institute of Children and Teenagers' Medical Complex. In 2007 he was first time elected as deputy of the National Assembly from the Republican party of Armenia. In the legislative elections of 2017, Mr. Babloyan was elected deputy and was appointed as the Speaker of the Parliament.

#### **Armen Ashotyan, Chairman of Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly**

Armen Ashotyan was born on July 25, 1975 in Yerevan. In 2000 he graduated from Yerevan State Medical University, specializing in Forensic medicine. In the period of 2003-2005, Mr. Ashotyan was the chairman of the Youth Organization of Republican Party of Armenia. In 2005 he was elected member of the National



Assembly for the first time. In 2009 he was appointed minister of Education and Science and he held this post up to 2016. In the legislative elections of 2017 Mr. Ashotyan was elected member of the National Assembly. He is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

