



Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement Brief Quarterly Overview, Public Version

January – March 2012

With the official Armenian-Turkish diplomacy still suspended, the normalization process between the two countries continues to significantly depend on civil society exchanges and track two efforts. These efforts seek to sustain the momentum and build favorable attitudes inside the societies towards each other until the two sides can diplomatically reengage. Despite the fact that the winter and early spring of 2012 added turbulence to Armenia-Turkey relations (including the French law on criminalization of the recognized genocides, as well as the commemoration of the February 1992 Khojalu events in Istanbul at the end of February 2012), the overwhelming majority of the partners and beneficiaries of SATR continued to work as usual and stood against this strong, albeit short-lived tide of negative rhetoric. This proves the resilience of the network structures built by SATR vis-à-vis provocative political events.

The highlights of the SATR activities in this quarter included:

- ICHD and TESEV completed a series of training workshops aimed at enhancing the capacity of evidence-based policy analysis in Armenia and Turkey. The first two training workshop series were held in Ankara and Istanbul on January 23-28, 2012 and in Yerevan on February 1-6, 2012. As a follow-up to the training, in March 2012, EPF, ICHD and TESEV invited the participants to write evidence based policy papers on various aspects of Armenia-Turkey relations and the rapprochement process to utilize the knowledge and the skills acquired at the training. The selected papers will be published on the SATR website as well as on the websites of EPF, ICHD and TESEV. They will also be distributed via EPF's mailing list of stakeholders interested in Armenia-Turkey dialogue.
- ICHD and GAYA organized a training workshop for Armenian and Turkish young women active in civic, business and political life in Yerevan and in Diyarbakir during March 2012. The goal of the training was to enhance the negotiation, leadership and communication capacity of Armenian and Turkish women interested in the promotion of mutual relations to promote development and implementation of cross-country and cross-regional cooperative initiatives. The trainings were interactive in nature, including simulation games, exercises, application of gained skills and knowledge for real life examples, etc. A similar set of trainings were conducted by ICHD and GAYA in Ankara and in Yerevan in February 2012 for a group of Armenian and Turkish young leaders in business, politics and civil society to promote development and implementation of cross-country and cross-regional cooperative gain initiatives.

- The project team of the “Inknagir” Literary Club traveled to Hopa, the Hamshen community in Turkey in late fall 2011. Based on the interviews conducted, Vahan Isakhanyan produced a 46-page report on *Armenian-speaking Hamshen Muslims*. Excerpts from the report were published in the Armenian print and on-line media. Over 300 photos were taken, which will be published on CDs along with the report over the next quarter. The results of the trip to Hopa were also delivered to a select audience during the Pecha-Kucha presentation on March 31, 2012.
- The Consortium issued the last three grants under the SATR’s Open Door Grants Scheme. As of the Selection Committee meeting held on March 13, 2012, the Open Door Grants Pool was exhausted and closed. The selected projects include: a) *publication of a bilingual book on the history of Armenian trade and economy on the current territory of Turkey*, b) *organization of a workshop involving Armenian and Turkish young environmentalists to produce a joint statement for [Rio+20](#)*, and c) *reinforcement of the role of female entrepreneurs in the rapprochement process via organizing a B2B event for businesswomen in Turkey*. The grant awards will be processed in April 2012, with the projects expected to be completed by August 31, 2012 at the latest.
- Members of the AATTC (Association of Armenian and Turkish Travel Companies), including three companies from Armenia and two from Turkey, traveled to Berlin to participate in the Berlin International Tourism Exchange (ITB) on March 9-13, 2012 to present the AATTC to the international tourism community, establish business contacts and market the regional tourism products developed by AATTC members in Armenia and Turkey. It is expected that in the near future the AATTC will host a minimum of three groups from Europe.
- YPC and Izmir University of Economics summarized the outcomes of the media monitoring, which substantiated the findings of the first phase of the media research that pointed on the asymmetry in coverage between Armenia and Turkey, as well as the negative effects of the protocols suspension on media coverage in both countries. The final report will be published in June 2012 and will be accompanied by recommendations for stakeholders on how to enhance the unbiased and objective media coverage of Armenia-Turkey relations.
- YPC and GPoT formed the Journalism Award jury teams. It was jointly agreed that the Journalism Award jury would include four people, including the winners of the 2011 journalism award. The jury teams were finalized in the following way: Armenia – previous year’s winner Eduard Mkhitaryan (Gala TV), journalist Gayane Abrahamyan (Eurasia.net and *ArmeniaNow*), editor of *Aravot* newspaper Aram Abrahamyan, as well as the Country Director of EPF, Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan. In Turkey, the jury will include the winner of the previous year’s journalism award Kadri Gursel (columnist at *Milliyet*), Yavuz Baydar (*Zaman*), Mustafa Karaalioglu (*Star Gazetesi*), as well as Sylvia Tiryaki (deputy head of GPOT). The award ceremonies in Armenia and Turkey are planned for June 4 and June 14 2012 respectively.
- EPF followed up on several documentary film projects supported through the SATR. The crew of the documentary film “Back to Gurun” traveled to Istanbul to conduct additional interviews for the film. It is expected that the production of the documentary will be completed by June 2012, with the premieres of the “work in progress” version anticipated to take place during the 9th Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan. Also, Radio Van FM station has started editing the six short 20-minute documentaries “One Day of Life” produced in cooperation with Yon Radio in Turkey as part of a joint Armenia-Turkey project co-funded by EPF and the British Embassy in Armenia. Meanwhile, the “Avtobus” documentary film supported via SATR’s Open-door Grants Pool is

currently in the post production stage. It is expected that both film projects will be completed over the next quarter.

- EPF engaged in negotiations with the National Association of Art Critics (AICA Armenia) and Anadolu Kultur around the implementation of the “Sweet 60s – Sweet Confusion” project. The main aim of the project is to allow the societies of Armenia and Turkey to learn about major formative cultural productions of both societies, created in the 1960s, which laid the foundation for the ideas that helped to shape these societies today. The project anticipates conferences in Istanbul and in Yerevan in May and June 2012, with the participation of a group of distinguished film experts and critics from Armenia and Turkey who will draw comparative analyses between the 1960s in the two countries coupled with screenings of classical eight Armenian and Turkish films, four per country, produced in the 1960s.
- UMBA and TABDC explored opportunities for connecting the Armenian Internet network to the Turkish network, which would provide Armenia with faster and more cost-effective Internet. Currently, UMBA and TABDC are analyzing the sector via meetings with the IT industry stakeholders in both countries. One of the goals is to conduct a feasibility study in the area. It is anticipated that Armenia will significantly benefit from connecting the two national Internet networks. UMBA and TABDC will continue looking into this sector and reaching out to stakeholders to collect comprehensive information about the sector and to reach a deal between Armenia and Turkey.
- UMBA and TABDC engaged in preparatory work for the upcoming Armenia-Turkey business conference to be held in Kars, Turkey, on June 15-16, 2012. UMBA and TABDC will invite around 60 businessmen representing different cities and business fields in Armenia and Turkey including light industry, construction, furniture production, mining, jewelry and trade. Conference speakers will present the current state of affairs and the prospects for Armenia-Turkey business cooperation. Participants will be able to discuss opportunities for business cooperation with their counterparts from the other country, and visit some of the businesses located in the Kars region.

USAID and the Consortium Members support Armenia-Turkey rapprochement by facilitating engagement between civil society groups, establishment and development of business partnerships and regional professional networks, and enhanced understanding between the people, for peace and economic integration in the region. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the Consortium and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.