



Armenia

Armenia-Turkey Dialogue

Project Goal

The goal of the project is to support cross-border partnerships among Armenian and Turkish peer groups in the non-governmental, media, and business sectors, in order to help them strategically contribute to state efforts to build relations between the two countries.

Impact in 2010

As part of its “Days Two and Three in Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement” project supported by USAID, EPF fostered a cooperative network of opinion makers and media figures from Armenia and Turkey through a series of high-level expert discussions that had a catalytic role in moving forward the Armenia-Turkey dialogue in that very sensitive period of time. Follow-up series of reports by participating opinion-makers and renowned journalists presented a realistic picture of Armenia-Turkey relations in the Armenian and Turkish media. Also, the talk show by a prominent Turkish TV

journalist Mehmet Ali Birand discussing Armenian youth’s perspective on Armenia-Turkey relations was the first ever event of this kind in the history of Armenia-Turkey relations: the Armenian youth perspective on the Genocide was broadcast in Turkey.

15 Armenian and 9 Turkish journalists improved their knowledge and understanding of ‘the other side’ and skills in mutual coverage through a series of expert-led workshops. Considering the heightened interest in media reporting on Armenia-Turkey relations since the start of the “football diplomacy” in 2009, EPF and the European Stability Initiative developed a tri-lingual information and contacts manual in Armenian, English and Turkish languages to facilitate contact-sharing for all parties interested in covering the topic.

Familiarization trips were organized for Turkish and Armenian tour operators through Armenia and Turkey respectively, which resulted in the upsurge

MISSION STATEMENT:

To empower people to effect change for social justice and economic prosperity, through hands-on programs helping them to improve their *communities* and their own *lives*.

"Any activity, whether at the elite, middle-range, or grassroots level, aimed at transforming the cross-border relationship, contributes to progress and to an atmosphere more conducive to conflict resolution, and we hope that this initiative will bring us one step closer to improved dialogue and cooperation between Armenia and Turkey,"

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of interest on the part of participating Armenian tour operators in developing tours to Eastern Turkey, ancient Armenian homeland. The project also led up to the production and broadcast of four documentaries by Yerevan-based Yerkir Media TV about contemporary Turkey: Tradition of *coup d'états* in Turkey; Past and present of the Kars-Gyumri railroad; Opening of the Armenian Surb Khach Church in Van, Turkey; and Armenian community schools in Turkey. The success of the films largely contributed to the plans of the Yerkir Media TV to establish a permanent journalistic post in Turkey, which increased the direct information flow between the two societies and the expert communities, in particular.

In October 2010, with a Consortium comprising Yerevan Press Club, International Center for Human Development, and Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia EPF received a two-year grant from USAID to implement a large-scale project supporting Armenia-Turkey rapprochement through development of business partnership and professional networks, engagement of civil society in alliance-building, and establishment of a favorable environment for dialogue and interaction. The Consortium bases its work on the accomplishments of a number of rapprochement projects and dedication to the cause of improving Armenia-Turkey relations.

Main Activities in 2011

In 2011, EPF will work together with its partners in the Consortium to maintain the momentum in Armenia-Turkey

dialogue via implementing the "Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement" project.

As part of the project, a series of joint events including business conferences and roundtables will be organized to support new commercial links, business associations and joint ventures in the areas of tourism, transportation, agriculture, IT, light industry, and construction materials. The project will also engage media, opinion leaders, youth, human rights activists, and arts and culture communities. Initiatives will range from talk shows to innovative mutual learning events with youth to joint arts and culture productions. A series of discussion events, exchange visits and capacity building activities will be organized to build trust between politicians and demonstrate that a return to frozen relations is in the interest of neither country.

An open-door grants pool will be announced at the start of 2011 with an aim to support innovative pilot ideas in any area related to the process of rapprochement. Armenian organizations willing to engage in joint initiatives with their Turkish counterparts will be invited to submit applications.

The project will contribute to the formation of cross-border networks, will increase confidence and decrease stereotypes among the two societies, will create conditions for policy and political actors to develop informal relations, and, in the long term, will help to address controversial issues hindering the process of Armenia-Turkey rapprochement.

