

Russia-Armenia Relations on the Context of Humanitarian Cooperation (1991-2023)

Rusya-Ermenistan İnsani İş Birliği (1991-2023)

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ABSTRACT

Although cooperation in the humanitarian field between Russia and Armenia in 1991-2023 has a special place, it is important to investigate it as it has not been comprehensively researched until now. It is known that humanitarian cooperation occupies one of the important places in the foreign policy activity of every state as "soft power". Since the factor of humanitarian cooperation plays an important role in decision-making mechanisms in foreign policy, special importance is given to activities in this field between the countries. The main purpose of writing the article is to research the establishment of the contractual and legal basis of cooperation between Russia and Armenia, its goals, main forms, the dynamics of implementation and development of cooperation in the field of culture, the impact of education and information, diaspora and public organizations, cooperation in the field of science, and to make scientific and theoretical generalizations. Historical-chronological analysis, comparative analysis and critical analysis methods were used during the research.

Keywords: Russia, Armenia, Culture, Education, Information, Diaspora

ÖZ

Rusya ile Ermenistan arasında 1991-2023 yılları arasında insani alanda yapılan iş birliği özel bir yere sahip olsa da bugüne kadar kapsamlı bir şekilde araştırılmadığından araştırılması önem arz etmektedir. İnsani işbirliğinin "yumuşak güç" olarak her devletin dış politika faaliyetinde önemli yerlerinden birini işgal ettiği bilinmektedir. Dış politikada karar alma mekanizmalarında insani iş birliği unsuru önemli rol oynadığından ülkeler arasında bu alandaki etkinliğe özel önem verilmektedir. Makaleyi yazmanın temel amacı Rusya ile Ermenistan arasındaki iş birliğinin akdi ve hukuki temellerini, amaçlarını, ana formlarını, kültür alanında iş birliğinin uygulama ve gelişme dinamiklerini, eğitim ve bilgilendirme, diaspora ve kamu kuruluşlarının iş birliğine etkisini bilim alanında iş birliğini araştırmak, bilimsel ve teorik genellemeler yapmaktır. Araştırma sırasında tarihsel-kronolojik analiz, karşılaştırmalı analiz ve eleştirel analiz yöntemlerinden yararlanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, Ermenistan, Kültür, Eğitim, Bilgi, Diaspora

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR gave a different character to the relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia, which had declared their independence. The political relations between Russia and Armenia in the 90s of the 20th century had an impact on cooperation in other areas as well. Cooperation in trade-economic, military, scientific-technical and humanitarian fields expanded. Humanitarian cooperation playing the role of “soft power” has taken a special place in mutual relations.

As is known, US Deputy Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye firstly used the concept of “soft power”. In his book he explained it as a country can achieve the results it wants in world politics because other countries - admiring its values, following its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness want to follow it ¹.

Many foreign states and international structures use the term “humanitarian cooperation” in their acts for the protection of human rights and humanitarian aid. Relations in fields such as culture, science, education, sports, and tourism are included in foreign cultural policy or are regulated separately. In general, there are many terminological differences in the study of humanitarian cooperation in the academic environment.

Culture, education, science, archival work, information, mass communications, sports, tourism, and work with young people belong to the field of mutual humanitarian activity of Russia in international associations². Also, in the bilateral agreements signed by Russia with individual states, “humanitarian cooperation” includes cultural, educational, scientific, informational, sports and youth exchanges.

Humanitarian cooperation is an integral part of Russia’s foreign policy. In the “International humanitarian cooperation” section of the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation updated in 2023, strengthening the position of the Russian language in the world, promoting the study and use of the Russian language in foreign countries, preventing the campaign of Russophobia, the formation of a single humanitarian space of the Russian Federation and the CIS member states, Russia helping to preserve the spiritual relations of the people of these countries and cooperation in the field of culture

1 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, New York, 2004, p. 76

2 “Soqlasheniye o qumanitarnom sotrudnichestve qosudarstv-uchastnikov SNQ ot 26 avqusta 2005 qoda” (Online), <https://cis.minsk.by/page/3994/soglasenie-o-gumanitarnom-sotrudnicestve-gosudarstv-ucastnikov-sodruzestva-nezavisimyh-gosudarstv>, 6 July 2024.

and information³. According to the concept, culture plays a special role in the humanitarian field as an effective tool for overcoming conflicts between states and shaping a unifying international agenda⁴.

It is obvious that in the early 1990s there was a colossal decline in interest in the Russian language due to centrifugal tendencies both in the CMEA countries and in the republics of the former USSR. But this trend has gone in the opposite direction since the late 1990s, thanks to the fact that stable connections and commerce began to be established. The development and legal consolidation of the status of the Russian language in the constitutions and practices of its closest neighbors is one of the tasks of Russia's humanitarian policy. The linguistic revolutions that swept across the USSR in 1989 led to the adoption of laws on the state languages of the republics. The status of the Russian language was defined, at best, by the term "language of interethnic communication," which does not have a clear legal interpretation.

A lot is being done to maintain the Russian language in the world. Important aspects - radio, television, print. There are foundations, for example, Russkiy Mir (Russian World), which has opened many Russian corners around the world.

The goal of the Russian Federation in humanitarian cooperation with Armenia was to protect and expand its influence in this country. Armenia, using cultural cooperation, tried to penetrate deeper into Russian culture, science and information fields, and to cool Russia's relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan.

1. Legal framework for humanitarian cooperation

Between 1991 and 2023, more than 20 documents on cooperation in the humanitarian field were signed between Russia and Armenia. A broad legal framework of relations has been created. Russian-Armenian intergovernmental agreements on scientific and technical cooperation on cooperation in the field of higher education (Moscow, January 11, 1993), on attestation of scientific and highly qualified professors and teachers (Moscow, 1995 June 27), in the field of culture, science and education (Istanbul, November 13, 1995); on the basis of this document, three-year exchange programs in the field of culture, science and education were signed between the governments, about establishment of pre-school educational institutions of the Ministry of Defense of the

3 "Konchepchiya vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy Federacii 2023", article 43-44 (Online) <https://www.mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1860586/>, 15 May 2024.

4 "Konchepchiya qumanitamoy politiki Rossiyskoy Federacii za rubejom" (Online), https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/1829856/, 22 June 2024.

Russian Federation in the territory of the Republic of Armenia (Moscow, January 26, 1996), about the establishment of general education schools of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in the territory of the Republic of Armenia (Moscow, January 26, 1996), reception of programs of Russian television and radio broadcasting companies in the territory of the Republic of Armenia from July 1, 1997 and broadcasting terms and conditions and a number of others have been signed⁵.

During the years of President Robert Kocharyan's rule (1998-2008), a number of new steps were taken to strengthen the contractual and legal basis of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries. In 2002, intergovernmental and interagency agreements were signed between the two countries: Cooperation Program between the Ministries of Culture, Joint Declaration on Cultural Cooperation on the holding of Russian Cinema Days and Russian Culture Days in Armenia, etc. The main purpose of the documents was to deepen cooperation in the field of culture.

During the official visit of the President of Armenia to Russia on January 16-18, 2003, a joint Declaration on cooperation in the field of culture was signed. In 2005, at the summit of CIS heads of state held in August, the President of the Republic of Armenia supported Russia's initiative to sign an agreement on humanitarian cooperation in the CIS⁶.

During the years of President Serzh Sargsyan's rule (2008-2018), there were some innovations regarding cooperation in the humanitarian field. On November 11, 2009, in Moscow, the Ministers of Culture of the two countries, A. Avdeyev and A. Pogosyan, signed the Cooperation Program for 2010-2012 between the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia. The program involved extensive cultural exchange. In 2011, the parties signed an agreement on cooperation in the humanitarian field, which is a fundamental document for the further development of mutual activity⁷. After that, the agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation in the field of culture, science and education dated November 13, 1995 became invalid.

5 "Mejdunarodniye soglashenia o sotrudnichestve v sfere obrazovania, Sostavitel", *Department mejdunarodnoqo sotrudnichestva v obrazovanii i nauke Minobrnauki Rossii*, Moskva, 2009; "Rossiysko-armyanskoye gumanitarnoye sotrudnichestvo", *Spravka DIP MID RF 12-10-2011, arxiv MID RF* (Online), <http://archive.mid.ru>, 15 April 2024.

6 Grigor Grigoryan, "Gumanitarnoye izmereniye armyano-rossiyskix otnosheniy", *Rossiya i noviyе gosudarstva Yevrazii*, ИМЭМО РАН, No. 1, 2018, p. 85.

7 "Soqlasheniye mejdru Pravitelstvom Rossiyskoy Federacii i Pravitelstvom Respubliki Armeniya o sotrudnichestve v qumanitarnoy sfere" (Online), <https://intermol.su/upload/iblock/896/iqqbf7mmyvo1t0tk0r0vo6u0m8jhf971.pdf>, 16 September 2024.

The first agreement was aimed at the further development and strengthening of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia in specially defined areas - culture, science and education. The second agreement was broad in content. Here, the wider interaction between Russian and Armenian public organizations, creative associations, unions and foundations - forms of culture, science, education, youth policy, information field - covered the entire humanitarian field. The agreement updated both the legal basis of cooperation in the humanitarian field and covered all forms of cooperation. This agreement formed the basis for further development of cooperation.

After Nikol Pashinyan was elected as the Prime Minister in 2018, the country switched to a parliamentary republic with constitutional reforms. Some new steps were taken in humanitarian cooperation with Russia. On April 19, 2022, the Cooperation Program in the field of culture for the years 2022-2025 was signed between the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia in Moscow⁸. These documents show that the legal framework of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries has been established and implemented in defined forms.

2. Cooperation in the field of culture

According to the signed documents, since 1993, cooperation has been implemented in various forms. Article 16 of the Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance signed between the two countries on August 29, 1997 provides for promoting the development of cooperation in the humanitarian field, strengthening relations in various fields of culture, helping to expand relationships between unions and associations in this field, cultural institutions, literary and artistic figures⁹. Days of Armenian culture were held in the Russian Federation on November 16, 2001. During these days, concerts, exhibitions, meetings of cultural figures, etc. were organized.

In 2002, a representative office of “Roszarubezhcenter” was opened in Yerevan in accordance with the general instructions of the administration of President Vladimir Putin in order to restore and strengthen the informational and cultural presence of Russia in the CIS countries. This representative office, which was later called “Rossotrudnichestvo”, is subordinated to the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs.

8 “Aleksey Overchuk vistupil na IX Rossiysko-armyanskom mejrejonálnom forumé” (Online), <http://government.ru/news/46553/>, 12 July 2024.

9 “Doqovor o drujbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoy pomoshi mejdu Rossiyskoy Federaciyey i Respublikoy Armeniya”, Article 16 (Online), https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/international_contracts/international_contracts/2_contract/47338/, 2 September 2024.

Russian art was represented at the “Golden Apricot” film festival and the “Interfest Yerevan” theater festival held regularly in Armenia¹⁰. In turn, Armenian filmmakers have participated in the international film forums “Kinoshock” (Anapa) and “Kinotavr” (Sochi) held in Russia since 1992. In 2008, Russian cultural figures visited Armenia on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Yerevan Russian State Drama Theater named after K. Stanislavsky, Order of Friendship of Peoples. The gatherings were part of the federal program to support Russian theaters in the CIS and Baltic countries. Yerevan Russian State Drama Theater participates in the “Meetings in Russia” festival of Russian theaters held in St. Petersburg every year.

In 2008, the season of Russian culture was organized in Armenia, and in 2009, the season of Armenian culture was organized in the Russian Federation. On the initiative of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev’s wife S. Medvedeva and Armenian President Serzh Sarkisyan’s wife R. Sarkisyan, famous ballet master, People’s Artist of the USSR, Lenin and State Prize laureate, Hero of Socialist Labor Yuriy Grigorovich at the National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after A. Spandarian “Spartacus” ballet was performed. The performance was organized with the help of the Moscow Bolshoi Theater and with the financial support of sponsors. The premiere took place on May 5, 2009 in Yerevan with the participation of S. Medvedeva and R. Sarkisyan¹¹. Culture figures from Russia took part in the performance.

Cultural days were important in cooperation. In 2016, the days of Armenia in Russia and Russian culture in Armenia were held. The cultural days began on August 20 in Gyumri at the ‘Hill of Honor’ memorial, which commemorates Russian officers who served during the Russo-Turkish wars of the 19th century and the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913¹². Since cultural cooperation plays an important role in bringing people closer to each other, it made sense to hold the opening ceremony of the cultural days in a complex related to military history. With this, the Armenian leadership pointed to Russian-Armenian unity in the fight against Türkiye. As it is known, in those wars, Armenian armed groups fought against the Ottoman state in the ranks of the Russian army. Therefore, the choice of the place where the opening of the cultural days was held was one of the indicators of Armenia’s attempt to cool the relations between Russia and Türkiye.

10 “ՈՍԿԵ ԾԻՐԱՆ. ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՆՈՐԱՀԱՅՑ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՆԻՇ (Golden apricot. A new-born symbol of Armenia)” (Online), <http://gaiff.tilda.ws/arm/about>, 4 August 2024.

11 “Rossiysko-armyanskoye qumanitarnoye sotrudnichestvo” (Online), <https://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/am/1666548/>, 11 August 2024.

12 Andrey Torin, “Dni duxovnoy kulturni Rossii – v Armenii” (Online), <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/15819>, 1 September 2024.

The opening ceremony of the Cultural Days of Armenia, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation, began on November 15, 2017 in the temple complex of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Moscow with the “Prayer Sounding in Eternity” project. As it is known, the church is a holy place where moral and spiritual values are propagated, it is the house of God. Culture is the embodiment of the national spirit of each nation. Undoubtedly, national and moral values are being undermined. However, holding such gatherings in the church was an attempt to include religion in cultural politics.

The geography of Armenian cultural days covered all subjects of the Russian Federation, even municipalities. Meetings are mainly held in Sochi, Adler, Krasnodar, Rostov, Armavir, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Zlatoust, etc., where Armenians are the majority.

11 public organizations related to Russia operate in Armenia. The main centers of Russian culture and the Russian language are the Russian-Armenian University, the Russian Drama Theater named after K.S. Stanislavsky (since 1937), the Moscow Culture and Business Center “Moscow House” (since 2007), the Russian Science and Culture Center in Yerevan (2009- since) and its branch in Gyumri (since 2017).

The main areas of activity of the Russian Science and Culture Center in Yerevan include:

- to develop bilateral humanitarian cooperation in the field of culture, science and education;
- to support the Russian language to promote education in the Russian language
- to help organizations of Russian compatriots, associations of graduates of Russian universities, non-governmental organizations interested in developing cooperation with Russia in the field of public diplomacy;
- promote interregional and innovative cooperation;
- promote international cooperation¹³.

13 “Rossiyskiy centr nauki i kulturi v Yerevane” (Online), <https://ksoors.org/rossijskij-centr-nauki-i-kultury-v-erevane/>, 4 September 2024.

The activities of the Moscow Cultural and Business Center Moscow House include:

- support and promotion of Russian culture and Russian language;
- protection of cultural heritage among Russians living in Armenia;
- patriotic upbringing of young people;
- development of cultural and business dialogue between Moscow and Yerevan;
- deepening of friendly relations between Armenia and Russia¹⁴.

Moscow House also organizes free Russian language courses in libraries, museums and various cultural centers in Armenia, and distributes propaganda materials.

In the following years, cooperation was continued and meetings were held. Among them, in May-June 2019, the exhibition “Materials on Ethnography of St. Petersburg (Western) Armenia” from the fund of the Museum of Russian Ethnography in Yerevan, the traditional “Russian Cinema Week” in Yerevan and Gyumri on May 22-26, June 17-21 Events such as the IX International Seminar “Faces of Memory”, “The latest technologies for the protection and restoration of manuscript and print heritage” in Yerevan took a special place.

On September 13, 2019, the exhibition dedicated to the 872nd anniversary of the founding of Moscow was opened at the Russian Art Museum. The works of Russian artists of the end of the 19th century, materials on the ethnography of “Western Armenia” were presented at the exhibition¹⁵. Presentation of the exhibition under the name “Western Armenia” showed Armenia’s intentions. As it is known, the Eastern Anatolian provinces of Türkiye in Armenia were called “Western Armenia”. This meant keeping unfounded territorial claims against Türkiye on the agenda of public life by using cooperation in the field of culture.

An agreement on cooperation in the relevant field was signed during the Russian Gastronomy Week held in Armenia from December 2 to 6, 2019. Although the agreement states to promote the development and protection of Russian cuisine in Armenia and Armenian cuisine in Russia, the actual goal was to show that Turkish and Azerbaijani dishes belong to Armenian cuisine.

14 “Deyatelnost, Dom Moskvi” (Online), <https://www.dommoskvy.am/>, 28 August 2024.

15 “Gumanitarnoye sotrudnichestvo” (Online), https://armenia.mid.ru/ru/countries/bilateral-relations/gumanitarnoe_sotrudnichestvo/, 25 July 2024.

A full-scale Armenian culture festival was held in Moscow from September 15 to December 8, 2019. Within the framework of the festival, concerts, educational lectures were held, and master classes were given in the fields of cooking, music and art¹⁶. In cooking and art classes, zurna, which is an ancient musical instrument of Azerbaijan, and “khash” (meaning - to boil, cook) dish belonging to Turkish cuisine were faked and presented under the name of Armenian cultural examples. On September 19, a meeting dedicated to the Independence Day of Armenia and the 95th anniversary of the Armenian-born French singer and actor Charles Aznavour was held in Yaroslavl. At the meeting, the “tragedies” faced by Armenians were also touched upon and thus wrongly politicized.

2020 was declared the year of Russian writer and diplomat A.S. Griboyedov in Armenia. This was not without reason. A.S. Griboyedov participated in the preparation of the Turkmenchai Treaty of 1828 as an employee of the embassy of Tsarist Russia in Tehran. The Armenians saw him as one of the culprits of their relocation to the South Caucasus, so they killed him there in the same year. The negative attitude of the Armenians towards him did not change in the later periods. In December 2019, Armenian citizen Shagen Arutyunyan threw red paint on A.S. Griboyedov’s monument in Yerevan. During the investigation, he stated that he did it in response to throwing paint on the memorial plaque of Garegin Njde in Armavir¹⁷. The desecration of the monument worried the Russian side. The Russian embassy in Yerevan called on the Armenian public to unanimously condemn this incident. Therefore, the Armenian authorities declared 2020 the year of A.S. Griboyedov.

On January 15, 2020, on A.S. Griboyedov’s birthday, employees of the Russian Embassy in Yerevan, the Russian Science and Culture Center, representatives of the Armenian Parliament, the public and youth organizations came and laid flowers in front of his monument. Despite the fact that some events were held in the country at the beginning of the year, most of these gatherings were postponed at the end. Although the main reason is given as the pandemic conditions, in fact, the start of the Second Karabakh war had an effect on it.

16 “Samiy bolshoy festival armyanskoy kulturi v Moskve” (Online) <https://armenianseasons.ru/>, 27 July 2024.

17 “Razdelayem poziciu Yerevana: posolstvo Rossii ob oskvernenni pamyatnika Qriboyedovu” (Online), <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20191203/Razdelyaem-pozitsiyu-Erevana-posolstvo-Rossii-ob-oskvernenni-pamyatnika-Griboedovu-21293692.html>, 29 July 2024.

Not only that, the number of traditionally held cultural days was reduced or canceled altogether. Another reason was related to the intentions of Nikol Pashinyan's government to prevent the promotion of Russian language and culture in Armenia. After liberating Azerbaijan's territories from occupation in the Second Karabakh War, Armenia weakened its cultural cooperation with Russia. Nevertheless, in 2022, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the days of Armenian culture in Russia were held in the cities of Moscow and Kislovodsk.

Thus, cooperation in the field of culture was implemented in various forms on the basis of signed documents. Cooperation was particularly extensive in 1991-2018. After 2018, cooperation in the field of culture gradually declined.

3. Cooperation in the field of science and education

One of the fields of cooperation between Russia and Armenia in 1991-2023 was science and education. The Language Law adopted in Armenia on April 17, 1993 established a complete monopoly of the Armenian language in both public and private educational fields. According to the law, the Armenian language was definitely the language of teaching and learning in educational institutions. After that, Russian schools were closed in Armenia and foreign language was taught in schools as a subject. It should be noted that the Russian schools and educational institutions operating for the children of military personnel serving in the Russian military base in the country were subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Although Russian is taught as a foreign language, the number of lessons was reduced in the 2000s. There were Russian language departments in public schools in Armenia. If there were six Armenian classes in the school, one was allocated to the Russian section. Restrictions apply to sending children to Russian schools. For this, it was required to be either a citizen of Russia or a representative of national minorities. Previously, citizens who had studied in Russian in Russia or other CIS countries had the right to study in this language. Such a situation violated the rights of the Russian-speaking category of the country's population and led to their discrimination¹⁸. In Russian-speaking schools, there was a shortage of textbooks in terms of methods and subjects. Many equipments and books were sponsored by Russian centers or various foundations.

Considering the fact that the Russian language constitutes the main "soft power" of

18 Gunel Musayeva, "Polojenije ruskoqo yazika v sovremennoy Armenii", *Naslediye*, Vol. 106, No. 1, p. 44-49.

Russia, such oppression of the language created certain difficulties in cooperation in the field of education.

The first big debate about the Russian language in Armenia took place in 2010, when the laws “On Language” and “On General Education” were amended at the initiative of the government. According to the amendment, 11 foreign language schools were supposed to be opened in Armenia. 2 of them should be private and 9 should be based on intergovernmental agreements. In the schools, the subjects related to Armenia were to be taught in the Armenian language¹⁹. Although the amendment created opportunities for Russian-language schools to operate, later the Dilijan International School (UWC Dilijan College) was opened, where teaching is conducted in English.

One of the forms of cooperation was the establishment of joint universities. In 1999, the Russian-Armenian (Slavic) University (RAU) was established in Yerevan. The university had 5 institutes. About 30 specialties were taught here²⁰. A training center for Armenian Russian scientists was operating on the basis of the Institute of Russian Literature of RAU. University graduates received diplomas of both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia. Examinations for some specialties were conducted in Russian.

RAU was conceived and formed not only as an educational center that meets the relevant Russian standards and where lessons are conducted in Russian, but also as a Russian cultural center that can serve the restoration and development of Russian-Armenian scientific, economic, spiritual, cultural relations.

Another example of cooperation in the field of education between the two countries was held in Yerevan on February 20, 2015. An agreement was signed on the opening of a branch of Moscow State University by M.V Lomonosov and the terms of its operation. In July of the same year, the branch started accepting its first students. Training is conducted in Russian in accordance with the methodology of the program of Russian universities, and diplomas were issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation accordingly. Despite the great interest of applicants who want to be admitted to the university, there are a number of requirements. The most important

19 Ayk Khalatyan, “Russkiy yazik v Armenii” (Online), <http://press-unity.com/analitika-stati/10616.html>, 28 August 2024.

20 “Pravila priyema na perviy kurs Rossiysko-Armyanskoqo Universiteta na 2024-2025 qq” (Online), https://rau.am/sveden/files/Pravila_priema_bak_rus_01.11.2023n.pdf, 12 May 2024.

requirement is that each applicant passes a written exam in Russian at the first stage²¹. Due to certain restrictions on the teaching of the Russian language in secondary schools, many applicants faced the problem of entering this university.

One of the forms of cooperation should be the education of Armenian citizens in Russian universities. According to statistics, more than 5 thousand Armenian citizens studied in Russia. 2 thousand of them were scholarships provided by the state at the expense of the federal budget. About 5,000 students studied in six branches of Russian higher education institutions²².

Every year, more than 200 places were allocated to Armenian citizens to study at Russian universities at the expense of the federal budget. In 2019, about 6,000 Armenian citizens studied at Russian universities. More than 1.5 thousand of them were financed from the federal budget. More than 4.5 thousand students studied at the Russian-Armenian University and 6 branches of Russian universities in Armenia²³.

The Russian-Armenian Youth Forum was traditionally organized by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Russia since 2015²⁴. Youth aged 18-35 participate in the forum. The main goal here was the formation of the Russian identity, the preservation of unity, the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and the preservation of the Russian language. Within the framework of the forum, youth were given tasks to analyze the current state of relations between the two countries in the field of humanitarian cooperation and to review the prospects of future cooperation in the new stage, which will be included in the final resolution of the forum. Russia has given special importance to the holding of such forums among youth every year. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, emphasized the importance of holding a youth forum during his official visits to Armenia²⁵. Therefore, the forum was one of the means of implementing the “soft power” policy in accordance with the Russian foreign policy concession.

21 “Filial MGU imeni M.V.Lomonosova v Yerevane” (Online), <https://eduscan.net/colleges/msuyerevan>, 4 June 2024

22 “Boleye 5 tisach studentov iz Armenii uchatsa v vuzakh RF: Mishustin o svyazax v sfere obrazovania” (Online), <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20230824/boleye-5-tys-studentov-iz-armenii-uchatsya-v-vuzakh-rf-mishustin-o-svyazyakh-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-64830599.html>, 11 April 2024.

23 “Gumanitarnoye sotrudnichestvo” (Online), https://armenia.mid.ru/ru/countries/bilateral-relations/gumanitarnoe_sotrudnichestvo/, 25 July 2024.

24 “Rossiysko-armyanskiy molodejnyy forum” (Online), <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/announcements/71808/>, 20 August 2024.

25 “Vstupitelnoye slovo Ministra inostrannix del Rossiyskoy Federacii S.V.Lavrova v xode peregovorov s i.o. Ministra inostrannix del Respubliki Armenia A.G.Ayvazyanom” (Online), https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1420834/, 11 August 2024.

4. Cooperation in the field of information: what was the goal?

In the Russian-Armenian humanitarian cooperation, the information field has a special place. Moscow's main goal in cooperation in this field was to preserve Armenia in the Russian information space and to strengthen its counter-influence. With the information it disseminated, Armenia aimed to cool Russia's relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan, present Ankara as a rival, and show Armenia as Russia's ally in the South Caucasus.

Russia has attached special importance to increasing the efficiency of mutual activity of states in the field of information in humanitarian cooperation. Therefore, Russia has been interested in the printing of Russian-language newspapers and magazines in Armenia. Regional versions of the newspapers *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *MK Ararat*, *Argumenti nedeli*, *Argumenti i facti* with local supplements were published in Armenia. The newspaper *Respublika Armenii* has been published as a Russian-language state newspaper since October 1990. Since 2002, this newspaper has been published as a Russian-language version of the *Ayastani Anrapetutyun* newspaper, and later as a separate publication. Here, weekly news articles in Russian were devoted to topics related to Russia. Since 2017, the shareholder of the daily newspaper *Ayastani Anrapetutyun* and the Russian-language publication *Respublika Armenii* has been operating as part of the State Information Agency *Armenpress*. However, from June 1, 2023, the newspaper stopped its publication. The relevant decision was taken at the general meeting of authorized representatives of the State Information Agency *Armenpress*. The reason for making such a decision was justified by the final calculations of financial indicators and the low profitability of the newspaper²⁶. The funds allocated for the publication of these newspapers were directed to the preparation and publication of news in Georgian, Chinese and Persian languages on the “*Armenpress*” website, as well as to the opening of correspondent offices abroad²⁷.

In Armenia, the socio-political newspaper *Golos Armenii* is published daily in Russian. The direction of the written articles is mainly anti-Turkish, anti-Azerbaijani and anti-Russian. The newspaper mainly publishes Western-oriented articles.

26 “Gazeti ‘Respublika Armenia’ i ‘Ayastani Anrapetutyun’ prekratyat izdavatsya s 1 iyunya” (Online) <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20230401/gazety-respublika-armeniya-i-ayastani-anrapetutyun-prekratyat-izdavatsya-s-1-iyunya-57557538.html>, 5 September 2024.

27 “«Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն» և «Ռեսպուբլիկա Արմենիա» թերթերի տպագրությունը կդադարեցվի (The printing of «Ayastani Anrapetutyun» and «Respublika Armenia» newspapers will be stopped)” (Online) <https://arm.sputniknews.ru/20230401/hajastani-hanrapetutjun-ev-respublika-armenia-terteri-tpagrutjuny-kdadarecvi-57557226.html>, 7 June 2024.

Novoye vremya is one of the independent socio-political daily newspapers published in Russian, whose articles are mainly against the Armenian authorities. The newspaper contains articles published with disgust and caricatures.

Television and radio have a special place in cooperation in the field of information. Russian television and radio programs played a major role in spreading the Russian language in Armenia. According to the law “On Television and Radio” adopted in Armenia in 2000, public television and radio companies were allowed to allocate time for broadcasting special programs in the languages of national minorities. In addition, serious restrictions were also imposed²⁸. Armenia is the only member state of the Commonwealth of Independent States that does not broadcast news in Russian.

Russian “Perviy Kanal”, “RTR Planeta” and “Kultura”, as well as interstate “Mir” TV channels of the CIS countries were included in the free social package. That is, residents of Armenia with an ordinary television antenna on the roof still had the opportunity to receive these channels in a public multiplex.

On June 18, 2020, the Armenian parliament discussed the package of draft laws On Audiovisual Media and the amendments to the Licensing law, which provide for the amendment of the Television and Radio law. The amendment essentially defined the status of audiovisual media services and broadcasters of audiovisual information, regulated the licensing, authorization and notification procedure, the basis of rights and obligations, as well as the relations arising during the activity. The draft law was adopted by the parliament on July 16, 2020, signed by the president on August 5, and entered into force²⁹.

The main difference of the law from the previous one was that it provided for the strengthening of the state language. In fact, the new law was aimed at suppressing the Russian language in Armenia, which did not correspond to the policy of the new government. Back in June 2018, the Minister of Education and Science A. Harutyunyan took the initiative to impose a large fine on the organizers of various events, including scientific symposia, if they do not provide full simultaneous translation into Armenian³⁰.

28 “Zakon Respubliki Armenia ‘O teledenii i radio’ prinyatyi 9 oktyabra 2000 qoda” (Online) <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=1464&lang=rus>, 12 June 2024.

29 “Prezident Armenii podpisal zakon ob audiovizualnix media, kotoryi zamenit zakon o SMI” (Online) http://arka.am/ru/news/society/prezident_armenii_podpisal_zakon_ob_audiovizualnykh_media_kotoryy_zamenit_zakon_o_smi_/, 13 June 2024.

30 “Ministr obrazovania Armenii priqrozil shtrafami za narusheniye zakona o yazike” (Online) <https://m.ru.armeniasputnik.am/society/20180610/12573760/ministr-obrazovaniya-gotovit-shtrafy-za-narushenie-zakona-o-yazyke.html>, 18 August 2024.

Although Russian TV channels have a fairly wide audience in Armenia, according to the requirements of the new legislation, they were broadcast only through cable television. In Armenia, not every citizen could afford it. A special agreement between Russia and Armenia had to be signed by January 1, 2021. Otherwise, it would not be possible to broadcast Russian TV channels in the multiplex. According to the law, if any foreign TV channel entered the public multiplex, then it was valid for seven years³¹.

The draft law published in January 2020 caused confusion in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. In the first reading of the law, the Russian government stated its readiness for appropriate cooperation with the Armenian side. The Russian Embassy in Yerevan has repeatedly stated this. However, it was difficult to prepare and sign the relevant interstate agreement in a short period of time. Tigran Akopyan, chairman of the National Commission for Television and Radio, said in a statement that the presence of foreign TV channels in the multiplex “poses a threat to the national security of Armenia” and the Russian Embassy agrees with this approach. However, he stated that it was misreported because he spoke about “information” and “language security” and not about national security, and did not mention Russian TV channels at all.

After this speech, the Russian embassy in Yerevan expressed its opinion on the new law. He emphasized that although this issue is an internal matter of Armenia as a sovereign state, it will directly affect the fate of Russian TV channels broadcast in Armenia. The embassy also expressed its hope that the mentioned considerations will complete the general picture of ongoing discussions, especially that the new law will definitely have a significant impact on the information policy, which is an important part of the general complex of relations between the two countries and peoples³².

The new law envisaged the complete suppression of the Russian language. Supporters of the draft law believed that the number of people interested in other foreign TV channels in Armenia is small, while Russian channels express opinions that do not coincide with Armenia’s information policy on a number of issues and, accordingly, harm public opinion.

The law was met with criticism both in the public and in the press. For example, Boris Navasardyan, head of the Yerevan Press Club, stated that the adopted law will not limit freedom of speech, however, it protects the state’s monopoly on terrestrial

31 Ayk Khalatyan, “Armenia oqranichivaet sebe dostup k rossiyskomu televideniю” (Online) <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4443065>, 24 August 2024

32 “Posolstvo RF v Armenii otreagirovalo na noviy zakon ob audiovizualnix media” (Online) http://arka.am/ru/news/society/posolstvo_rf_v_armenii_otreagirovalo_na_novyy_zakon_ob_audiovizualnykh_media, 12 July 2024.

broadcasting, which hinders the development of the media. Criticizing the state's long-standing monopoly on broadcasting, he said that if it was justified to some extent in the previous analog broadcasting era simply because of limited technological capabilities, the same approach cannot be maintained after the transition to digital broadcasting, as such a situation hinders the development of the television industry. The head of the Press Club also stated that it is wrong for the authorities to suddenly stop broadcasting Russian channels. According to him, the authorities can use violations of the law. For example, he cited the fact that television channels must comply with the election legislation and the Election Code, which stipulates a one-day silence before voting, while foreign television channels do not comply with this requirement. According to him, these sanctions can be a sufficient reason to ultimately deprive the license³³.

Drawing attention to the fact that Russian television channels are not very popular in Armenia, the director of the Caucasus Institute, political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan noted that, according to the information he had two to three years ago, less than 6% of the population watched these channels. "Perhaps there are some elements of uncertainty in the law. But I don't think there is an anti-Russian component"³⁴.

In general, the provisions of the new law on audiovisual media did not take into account the interests of numerous Armenian citizens who make up the permanent audience of Russian channels. The broadcasting of Russian TV channels did not threaten Armenia, which is a mono-ethnic country. But it seems that political goals were taken into account in the new law. The new government was clearly anti-Russian. Pro-government media and social networks were also openly anti-Russian.

According to the decision adopted in August 2020, the broadcasting of Russian TV channels in Armenia was carried out on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement. However, in September 2023, the Armenian authorities brought up the issue of closing Russian TV channels again. Lusine Badalyan, deputy of the ruling Civil Treaty faction, stated that the content of Russian TV channels is anti-Armenian and a threat to the country's security. She stated that when there is a threat to the security of the state, certain steps will be taken, regardless of whether it will be useful or not³⁵.

33 Tigran Petrosyan, "Armyanskiye analitiki iskluchili antorossiyskuyu podopleku novoqo zakona o media" (Online) <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/352792/>, 24 July 2024.

34 Tigran Petrosyan, "Armyanskiye analitiki iskluchili antorossiyskuyu podopleku novoqo zakona o media" (Online) <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/352792/>, 24 July 2024.

35 "Armenia mojet otklucit rossiyskiye telekanali" (Online), <https://www.forbes.ru/society/497573-armenia-mozet-otklucit-rossijskie-telekanaly>, 11 July 2024.

The closure of Russian TV channels was discussed in Armenia for a long time. The deputy noted that this topic comes up when every issue related to television is discussed.

Chief of Staff of the Cabinet of Ministers of Armenia, Arayik Harutyunyan, stated that the Russian press is waging a hybrid war against Armenia. On September 20, he commented on the reports that the participants of the protest action in Yerevan about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh broke into the government building and met the American troops there as follows: “This is complete misinformation. On that day, not a single protester entered the government building, moreover, there were no American paratroopers there either”³⁶. Noting that the most disgusting propagandists of Russian TV channels are Armenians, Arayik Harutyunyan mentioned the names of Margarita Simonyan, the editor-in-chief of Russia Today, her husband Tigran Keosayan, Aram Gabrelyanov, the founder of Life, and Roman Babayan, the editor-in-chief of “Govorit Moskva” radio.

Boris Navasardyan, head of the Yerevan Press Club, also spoke in favor of shutting down Russian TV channels. He stated that the Television and Radio Commission of Armenia has already provided the government with legal grounds to cancel the intergovernmental agreement with the Russian Federation on the public multiplex broadcasting of “Perviy Kanal” and “Russia 1”. But since this was not enough, they would continue to work on alternative platforms. According to him, the Russian side confirmed the mentioned violations, and the Armenian side agreed with it³⁷.

Studies show that in 1991-2023, Russia used its organizational and intellectual resources necessary to turn Armenia into an active sphere of influence not only in the South Caucasus, but also in the region. The regime that came to power in Armenia after the “Velvet Revolution” behaved cautiously in relations with Russia. Cooperation with Russia in the field of media has been weakening since 2018.

5. The influence of diaspora and public organizations on cooperation

Humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Armenia was also influenced by diaspora and public organizations. This is not in vain. Because in modern international relations, the activity of the diaspora is also evaluated as a resource base of politics.

36 Arayik Harutyunyan, “Ով ավելի մեծ սուտ ասի, կստանա Կրեմլի կեսը. Արայիկ Հարությունյան-Whoever lies too much, half of the Kremlin is his” (Online), <https://www.aysor.am/am/news/2023/09/24/%D5%B0%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6/2157035>, 12 August 2024.

37 “Rossiyskiye kanali ne budut otklucat v Armenii” (Online), <https://qafqazinfo.az/news/detailru/-20820>, 22 June 2024

Armenian diaspora is also called *Spyurk* - Armenian community living outside Armenia. In the dictionary of the Armenian language, the word *spyurk* is explained as “scattering or spreading in different directions”. The word is used both as a term in scientific circulation and in social practice and everyday speech. It should be noted that the translation of the word diaspora from the ancient Greek language means “scatter, spread” and for the first time this word was used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible to refer to the spread of Jews among other nations³⁸. The Jews later replaced the word diaspora with the Hebrew word *galut* (expulsion). This term is used by Jews as a significant and objective proof of the violence and tragic events they experienced in history. Armenians also want to take advantage of these steps of the Jews to present themselves as “kicked out of their homeland”.

In the second half of the 20th century, Armenian transnational networks and political projects created by them, the so-called “Armenian genocide”, “Artsakh”, etc. in foreign policy, it was used as a tool for manipulation and influencing the internal processes of other states.

The Armenian authorities viewed the Armenian organizations in Russia and the diaspora as a means of strengthening the country’s positions in the international world. The presence of Armenians living in Russia and the functioning of their organizations has affected Armenia’s relations with Russia.

According to the 2010 census data, 1,182,388 Armenians lived in Russia. In 2021, it was 946,172³⁹. Despite the large number of Armenians in Russia, most of them come to work because of the harsh living conditions in Armenia. The main reason for this is the ease of migration to Russia, the absence of language barriers and visa regime. Newly arrived Armenians were helped to settle in Russia by their relatives who settled earlier. However, most of them do not join diaspora groups at all.

Armenians immigrated to Russia not only from Armenia, but also from Uzbekistan, Georgia and other newly independent states. Therefore, the structure of the Armenian diaspora in Russia is not homogeneous. Although it is compact in some places, the settlement is not like that in the whole country. They are mostly in Stavropol, Krasnodar and Rostov regions.

38 Viktor Dyatlov, Eduard Melkonyan, *Armenyanskaya diaspora: ocherki sochiokulturnoy tipologii*, Institut Kavkasa, Yerevan, 2009, p. 8.

39 “Nacionalniy sostav Rossii 2024 (perepis 2020)” (Online), <https://www.statdata.ru/nacionalnyj-sostav-rossii>, 14 June 2024.

Armenian Spyurk was intended as a means of influence in conflicts, clashes and wars. This goal was clearly shown when groundless territorial claims against Azerbaijan began. After Armenia began to occupy Azerbaijani lands, Russian Armenians gained a new incentive for national self-organization. On March 13, 1988, the Karabakh Committee was established at the same time as the powerful rallies held every week near the Surb Harutyun church in Moscow. Its activists were Koryun Nahapetyan, Manuk Shamirov and Ruben Gevorgyan.

After that, on the initiative of Moscow Armenians and church officials, the process of uniting small organizations into a large community structure began. This led to the establishment of the Mako Cultural Society of Moscow on June 29, 1989⁴⁰. On June 13, 1990, the Mako Council and Board of Directors were established. On November 30, 1991, the founding meeting of the Moscow Armenian Community was held in the Parliament Center on Tsvetnoy Boulevard in Moscow. Ruben Melkonyan was elected the Chairman of the Council, and Gegham Khalatyan was elected the Chairman of the Management Board. On June 25, 1992, there was a split in the community. Part of the community members left the organization and formed a new Moscow Armenian Community registered on February 16, 1993. The Chairman of the Council was Samvel Grigoryan, and the Chairman of the Management Board was Gegham Khalatyan.

Some Armenian officials and clergy took the initiative to merge these two structures. As a result, a new organization was created. It became the Moscow Armenian Assembly, which was established on June 20, 1993. Serzh Jilavyan was elected its president. On the basis of the Moscow Armenian Assembly, the International Armenian Assembly was established on July 22, 1993, and the World Armenian Assembly was established in December 1994. Serj Jilavyan became the president of these structures.

The new rise in the establishment of organizations of Moscow Armenians was prompted by the law “On National-Cultural Autonomies” adopted in Russia in June 1996. Armenian organizations were established in the regions of the capital. On September 13, 1997, the city-wide Armenian autonomy was registered on the basis of the single district autonomy in the South-West district of Moscow headed by S.S. Grigoryan. On February 15, 1998, at the “Arbat” hotel, 9 autonomies of other districts of Moscow held a founding conference to create a legal city-wide structure, but it was not registered.

40 “Na puti k SAR”, *SAR* (Online), <https://sarinfo.org/about/milestones/on-the-way/>, 12 August 2024.

“Miatsum” regional public organization was established on September 4, 1999 under the chairmanship of N.Muradyan. At the founding congress held on May 25, 2000 at the “President” hotel, this organization was transformed into a new community structure with the old name of Moscow Armenian Community. The chairman of the council was N. Tevanyan, and the chairman of the board was R. Arutyunov.

The organization of Armenians living in foreign countries, including Russia, led the Armenian authorities to take a new initiative to unite all Armenians. In the autumn of 1999, the 1st congress “Armenia - Diaspora” was held in Yerevan at the initiative of the leadership of the Republic of Armenia. It was this event that formed the idea of establishing an all-Russian Armenian organization among many members of the Russian Armenian delegation participating in his work. Some representatives and groups of the Russian Armenian community had such an idea even before. The leader of one of the groups was Ara Arshavirovich Abramyan, the famous Russian entrepreneur, the main initiator and ideologist of the establishment of the All-Russian public organization Union of Armenians in Russia (UAR), the president of Soglasie Closed Joint Stock Company. It was he and some people who managed to form the initiative group and implement the idea.

The ideas of the new union differed from others. The founders of this organization concealed their main goals and declared that the organization aims to strengthen the relations between the authorities and non-governmental organizations and the Russian statehood. Because the reason for the disintegration of the previous alliances was that they were not in line with Russia’s interests. The founders of the Union stated that the goal is of national importance, and real progress towards it requires huge resources - human, intellectual, financial, etc. requires. This suggests the need to mobilize all national potential. According to them, the main condition for success was the understanding that seven million Armenians scattered around the world can become a single Armenian nation only by having clear and precise mechanisms of interaction⁴¹.

In the studied years, UAR had 85 regional and 647 city branches across Russia. Despite the large scale of the Union’s activities, many Armenians trusted it and its leadership. This mistrust increased after Ara Abramyan’s participation in the alliance with Tigran Urikhanyan from the Alliance party in the 2021 parliamentary elections and the results became known. They got only 0.95% of the vote. However, the leaders of the

41 “Ideologiya SAR”, SAR (Online), <https://sarinfo.org/about/Ideology/goals/>, 2 September 2024 .

union regularly expressed their views on the internal situation of Armenia and the policy of the current government⁴².

In Russia, there are also the Armenian Assembly, St. Petersburg Regional Armenian National-Cultural Autonomy, Rostov Armenian Community, Nairi Stavropol Regional Armenian National-Cultural Autonomy, Sochi Sevan Armenian Society, etc. Armenian organizations, Tashir Foundation under the leadership of Samvel Karapetyan, Martakert Charitable Foundation in Rostov Region, Urartu Youth and Children Support Foundation, etc. was operating.

Relations between the diaspora and the Armenian government have had some peculiarities. For many years, the diaspora was perceived as a tool to sponsor more projects in Armenia, so government officials were wary of its strengthening. Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the first president of Armenia, was not a supporter of establishing broad relations with the diaspora. Robert Kocheryan paid attention to establishing relations with Western Armenians for the purpose of sponsorship. A certain revival in the relations between the Diaspora and Armenia took place during the reign of Serzh Sargsyan. The Ministry of Diaspora was established in the country. This work was partially implemented, as it was created with influential representatives of the diaspora and members of only a few communities.

The government of N. Pashinyan abolished the Ministry of Diaspora. In its place, a new institution - the head office of the Republic of Armenia for work with the Diaspora headed by Zareh Sinanya - was created. However, the new institution and its head were repeatedly criticized. Although it previously supported the government of N. Pashinyan, during the Second Karabakh war, this institution showed a mostly negative attitude towards the existing government.

From the moment military operations began, Russian Armenians began to support Armenia. Diaspora representatives sent material aid and collected funds for financial support. First, at the end of September 2020, the Union of Armenians of Russia sent aid⁴³. During the military operations, the head of the Tashir group of companies, Samvel Karapetyan, allocated 3 million US dollars for the implementation of various projects in

42 "Armyanskaya diaspora Rossii – demografiya, politiceskoye polozheniye i obshestvennoye mneniye" (Online), <https://kavkaz-uzel.eu/blogs/83781/posts/49967>, 13 September 2024.

43 "Pervaya partiya pomoshi ot Soyuza arman Rossii uje v puti" (Online), <https://sarinfo.org/news/novosti-sar/pervaya-partiya-pomoschi-ot-soyuza-armyanrossii-uzhe-v-puti.html>, 10 August 2024.

Armenia and the Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is under the occupation of Armenia⁴⁴.

It should be noted that the so-called “humanitarian aid” from Russia to Armenia, but in fact the transportation of weapons and ammunition was carried out through Armenia Avia and Nord Star airlines. The Embassy of Armenia in the Russian Federation informed about charter flights⁴⁵. Arms and ammunition were given to Armenia under the name of “humanitarian aid”. In October 2020, it became known to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan that the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia is bringing weapons to the country under the name of “humanitarian aid” on behalf of the Armenian diaspora. Airplanes of airlines registered by the Armenian government were used for transportation. Igor Korotchenko, the editor-in-chief of the Russian magazine *Nachionalnaya oborona*, wrote about these deliveries that they were mainly financed by staunchly nationalist representatives of the Armenian diaspora, who had sufficient funds for the purchase and smuggling of weapons⁴⁶.

Until the end of September 2020, the leadership of the Union of Armenians of Russia spread information that about 20 thousand Armenians - diaspora immigrants in Russia will participate in military operations. Thus, diaspora Armenians in Russia actively participated in the process of recruiting mercenaries. They became participants in the commission of war crimes against Azerbaijan.

The defeat of Armenia in the war and the signing of the tripartite declaration between Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia caused the anger of Armenian organizations in Russia. In this regard, representatives of some organizations demanded the suspension of financial aid to Armenia and the resignation of the prime minister. In 2021, UAR

Chairman Ara Abramyan called Nikol Pashinyan a traitor, liar and accused him of not releasing the soldiers held captive by Azerbaijan.

The majority of Russian Armenians did not support the beginning of peace processes in the region. This is where their open dissatisfaction with the activities of Nikol Pashinyan’s administration originates. The defeat in the war also showed the failure of the Armenian diaspora in Russia.

44 “Milliarder Samvel Karapetyan prodoljayet pomogat Artsakhu” (Online), <https://t.me/reartsakh/4779>, 10 June 2024.

45 “Posolstvo Armenii v Rossii” (Online), <https://www.facebook.com/armembrus>, 28 August 2024.

46 “Postavki orujia v Armeniu – put k bolshim jertvam v Karabaxskoy voyne” (Online), <https://vestikavkaza.ru/news/postavki-oruzia-v-armeniu-put-kbolshim-zertvam-v-karabahskoj-vojne.html>, 11 August 2024.

The Armenian diaspora in Russia also used the means of bribing some Russian politicians, public figures and well-known persons. Therefore, the activities of some pro-Armenian Russian MPs have had a negative impact on bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Russia, as well as on the process of peace negotiations in the region.

Thus, research shows that the diaspora factor played a special role in Russia-Armenia relations in 1991-2023. Thus, the Armenian organizations in Russia, acting with baseless fantasies, have not been able to achieve almost anything during these years. Despite being supported by various foundations and individual Armenian businessmen, all their efforts were wasted during the Second Karabakh War.

Conclusion

According to the concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, humanitarian cooperation, culture is one of the effective means for the elimination of contradictions between states and the formation of a unifying international agenda. From this perspective, humanitarian cooperation served as an important 'soft power' tool in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation between 1991 and 2023, particularly in its relations with Armenia.

Humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Armenia began in 1991 after the establishment of political relations. More than 20 documents signed in the humanitarian field between the two countries in the early 1990s provided the legal framework for cooperation in the fields of culture, science and technology, higher education, and information. However, most of these documents have not been implemented.

The high development of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries took place during the presidency of Robert Kocharyan. A number of inter-governmental and inter-departmental agreements have been signed - the program of cooperation between the ministries of culture, the Joint Declaration on Cultural Cooperation on the holding of Russian Cinema Days and Russian Culture Days in Armenia, etc.

In 2002-2017, relations between Russia and Armenia in the field of culture expanded. During these years, cultural days were widely celebrated in both countries. Armenia has promoted its culture in Russia, and there has been a mutual flow of tourists over the years.

The Youth Forum has traditionally been organized by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Russia since 2015. Youth aged 18-35 participated in the forum.

Within the framework of the forum, they were given tasks to analyze the current state of relations between the two countries in the field of humanitarian cooperation and to review the prospects of future interaction at a new stage, which will be included in the final resolution. The last time this forum was held during the official visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov to Armenia - in September 2023.

One of the main goals of the Russian foreign policy concept was to strengthen the role, importance and competitiveness of the Russian language. Accordingly, Russian centers operated in Armenia in the years under review. Their main activity was the widespread promotion of Russian culture and language.

Parents who want their children to study in the Russian section in Armenia must obtain a special permit and provide a reason for this. Those units provide the necessary funds to companies or centers of the Russian Federation operating in Armenia.

Studies show that in the field of education in Armenia, Russian is studied as a foreign language. Severe restrictions on language rights under a law passed in 1993 deprived citizens of the opportunity to study in the Russian language and are still in place, despite popular discontent.

These restrictions were not limited only to the field of science and education. In the field of information, there was also a fight against the Russian language. According to the law "On Audiovisual Media" adopted by the Armenian Parliament in 2020, Russian TV channels have already started broadcasting on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement. However, in September 2023, the Armenian authorities brought up the issue of closing Russian TV channels again. All measures taken by the Armenian government aimed to prevent the spread of the Russian language.

The factor of diaspora and Armenian organizations has also taken a special place in the humanitarian cooperation between the two states. Thus, one of the main activities of the diaspora is to promote Armenian values and culture, and to cool Russia's relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The main activity of the Union of Armenians of Russia and other communities and organizations, which was created as a result of the joint efforts of Armenians living in Russia, is to promote Armenian ideals.

The large Armenian community in Russia is primarily the result of economic migration. Despite the fact that many of them prefer not to join the diaspora structures, a certain part of them still actively participate in the domestic and foreign politics of

Armenia. In addition, diaspora Armenians also sponsor representatives of the Russian government to promote their interests. However, the Second Karabakh War showed that the Armenian diaspora in Russia did not succeed in influencing the internal politics of Armenia.

Thus, the research of the issues of humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Armenia in 1991-2023 allows us to come to the conclusion that it was directly influenced by the state of political relations between the two states. After the independence, although the legal framework was created in the field of humanitarian cooperation, only a certain part of the signed contracts was implemented. Also the Armenian side presented Türkiye as an enemy of Russia in various exhibitions and meetings of poets and writers, which were organized mainly on cultural days in Armenia. One of the directions of the propaganda was that preventing Türkiye from entering the former Soviet territory is one of the main goals of Armenia. Armenia tried to create a Russian-Turkish confrontation in the Caucasus.

The coldness between the two states after 2018 has also had an impact on the humanitarian sector. Thus, the measures taken against the promotion of the Russian language and culture in Armenia have been expanded. This, in turn, damaged mutual understanding and mutual trust, which is the basis of the military-political alliance.

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