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## Threats to Armenia's Security in the National Strategy and Practice with Special Emphasis on External Security

**Abstract:** The national security strategy adopted in 2007 provided a detailed definition of security and identified its threats. The key threat to the Armenian state was considered to be the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The document indicated the Collective Security Treaty Organisation main guarantor of security, with Russia being Armenia's main partner in bilateral relations. The second position in the strategy was assigned to cooperation with the NATO and the OSCE. One of the priorities identified was to intensify the economic and trade connections with the European Union and participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy as a step towards integration with European structures. As to bilateral relations, the most significant were Armenia's contacts with Georgia and Iran. If we compare the assumptions of the strategy with the policy pursued by Armenia after 2007, it is clear that the measures taken are in line with the provisions of the document. By the end of 2016, the most serious threat to Armenia – the Nagorno-Karabakh issue – remained unresolved. Russia reinforced its position as Armenia's strategic ally. The talks conducted between Armenia and the NATO are of little significance in view of the obligations assumed by Armenia. The same goes for the talks with the European Union after Armenia's withdrawal from signing the association agreement, accession to the Eurasian Economic Union on 01 January 2015 and signing bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** *Armenia; Caucasus; Nagorno-Karabakh; NATO; European Neighbourhood Policy*

The Republic of Armenia is the smallest country of the South Caucasus region, with an area of a mere 29,800 km<sup>2</sup>. The country has no access to the sea; it shares a 787 km border with Azerbaijan (including a 221 km border with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic), 164 km with Georgia, 35 km with Iran and 268 km with Turkey (Państwa Świata, 2009, p. 22.) As of 31 December 2012, Armenia had a population of 3,026,000, with Armenians accounting for 98.11% of the country's citizens. The majority were members of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Population in Armenia). Armenians are an Indo-European nation, for centuries supported by Russia as a counterbalance for the Islamic nations, which may also explain Armenians' positive feelings towards Russia (Włodkowska-Bagan, 2012, pp. 69–73). While Armenian is the official language, other languages used include Kurdish, used by the Yazidis, and Russian. For many years, Armenia has been involved in an ethnic and territorial dispute with Azerbaijan concerning Nagorno-Karabakh. „For Armenians Karabakh is the last outpost Karabakh is the last outpost Karabakh is the last outpost Azerbaijanis talk of it as a cradle nursery, or conservatoire, the birthplace of their musicians and poets” (de Wall, 2003, p. 3) After the 1992 conflict concluded with peace negotiations in 1994 under the auspices of the Minsk group of OSCE, no permanent solution was reached because of differences in positions (Cheterian, 2008, pp. 88–90). As a result of the war 750,000 people were relocated, and there are still incidents and skirmishes on the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh (Świętochowski, 2006, p. 174). Communication and trade between Armenia and Azerbaijan and its supporter – Turkey – has ceased. These events led to a partial isolation of Armenia in the region and limited its room for manoeuvre in international politics. Russia remains an ally of Armenia, without any likely alternative. These were the circumstances of developing the first and only national security strategy of Armenia in 2007. By the end of 2016, no changes had been introduced to the document. The aim of this study is to analyse the assumptions of the national security strategy, with particular emphasis on external security, and their reflection in the country's policy and alliances. The hypothesis of the study is as follows: the strategy assumptions defined the threats to the state security, Armenia's strategic partners and the direction of its foreign policy. To verify this hypothesis, the author framed the following research questions:

- (1) What external and internal threats to Armenia's security were mentioned in security strategy?
- (2) What aspects of foreign policy were defined by the strategy?
- (3) What is the place of the Russian Federation, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the European Union and NATO in the foreign policy of Armenia?
- (4) Which objectives of the strategy have been successfully put into practice?



(5) What differences can be observed between the wording of the strategy and the policy pursued by Armenia?

The article is based on the literature available and website materials.

### **The Assumptions of the National Security Strategy**

In the introductory part of the document, stating the definition of national security, the concept of national security was equated with state security (Koziej, 2011, pp. 20–21). National security is defined as a policy aimed at guaranteeing security of the state, sustainable development and preservation of the Armenian national identity. The state security was to be guaranteed by efficient governance, the rule of law, democratic values, independent and impartial judiciary, military forces ensuring security and foreign policy supporting Armenia's involvement at the international forum. The document emphasises guarantees of the country's territorial integrity, inviolability of its borders and ensuring peace (Republic of Armenia, National Security of Strategy).

Threats to the national security were defined in the strategy as actions from external and internal sources. The key security issues were considered to be the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the policy of Azerbaijan and Turkey, whose actions could result in a blockade of transport routes and obstacles to transit and trade. Economic sanctions imposed on Iran – Armenia's ally – could also present a security threat. That is why the Collective Security Treaty Organization membership is vital for Armenia. Its signatories declared that they would refrain from the use of force against other countries and from joining other military pacts. They also affirmed that aggression against one signatory would be perceived as an aggression against the entire organisation. Armenia considers its participation in this organization as a means to ensure its security and supplies of military equipment on preferential terms and combat terrorism and trafficking in arms and drugs.

With a view to improving its energy security, Armenia participates in the activities of TRACECA and INOGATE, and in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it built a number of hydroelectric power plants. Epidemics and natural disasters are also considered to be a significant threat to Armenia's external security. A factor contributing to the national security should be the preservation of national identity of the Armenian diaspora, whose efforts are enhancing the international position of Armenia (Republic of Armenia, National Security Strategy).

The strategy indicates the following internal security threats: decreased efficiency of public administration, loss of trust in the judiciary, slow progress of reforms, shortcomings in election procedures, lack of social services, unequal access to health service and education, low degree of urbanisation, low rate of natural increase and



depopulation of rural areas. The challenges identified include the creation of a competitive market economy, reduction of the grey economy, including illegal money transfers, trade liberalisation, development of small and medium-sized enterprises, expansion of transport and telecommunications networks and education meeting the demands of the economy. According to the document, the measures aimed at improving the national security taken by the Armenian government related to reforms ensuring sustainable development of the state based on democratic values and use of best practices. The objectives considered essential for the national security include efficient public administration, respecting human rights, development of a civil society, reforms of the judiciary, increasing the efficiency of local governments, combating corruption and establishment of a crisis management centre. The document stressed that, to be able to resist aggression from the outside and ensure integrity of the state, Armenia should build national armed forces according to the latest European standards and to engage in cooperation to address the conflicts in the region. Integrity of the state should be promoted by building a competitive, financially stable market-based economy, creating favourable conditions for Armenian and foreign businesses and promoting ecological and energy-efficient technologies. In economic terms, measures aimed at a greater energy independence and more efficient use of ecological sources and nuclear energy were indicated as priority. Practices promoting environmental protection were provided for, such as cleaning lake Sevan, supervision over the storage of hazardous waste and creating an early warning system for disasters. Internal security of Armenia should be promoted by new quality of life, elimination of poverty, better access to education and health service, satisfying the social needs of the population, creation of new jobs, elimination of unemployment, prevention of brain drain and streamlining the system of pensions. The objectives planned as part of the long-term policy of the state included increasing the scientific potential, preservation of national heritage and intellectual property, as well as providing better access to culture (Republic of Armenia, National Security Strategy).

Since gaining independence, Armenia's political elites realised that the national armed forces were unable to guarantee security without assistance, which should be sought among the stronger partners in the region (Cheterian, 2008, p. 45). This was reflected in the contents of the strategy, based on two principles: complementarity, stating that Armenia should maintain relations with valuable actors in the region, and participation in international processes consistent with its interests. The complementarity principle is based on strategic relations with Russia, the European development path (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2016, p. 61), cooperation with the USA, Iran, members of the CIS and Collective Security Treaty Organization, of which Armenia is a founding member. The second most important objective according to the Strategy is cooperation



with NATO, participation in the political, military, economic and environmental efforts of OSCE as well as in the regional and international activities of organisations for arms control. As part of its cooperation with NATO, Armenia takes part in the activities of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace programme (de Wall, 2003, p. 45).

One of the priorities of the strategy is to intensify the economic and trade connections with the European Union and active participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy as a step towards integration with European structures. Armenia's participation in the Council of Europe serves as a confirmation of its place in the European family of nations and an obligation to adopt European standards.

Armenia is also a founding member of the CIS, participating in economic, humanitarian, political and military programmes, efforts to ensure border security, and combating international terrorism, organised crime, drugs trafficking and illegal immigration. Furthermore, Armenia participates in the activities of WTO and Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and cooperates with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The latter's assistance played a key role in the public sector reforms in Armenia. In terms of bilateral cooperation, the relations between Armenia and Russia are of paramount importance. The strategic partnership of Russia arises from traditional ties and economic relations between the two nations, Russia's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh mediation effort and the presence of a large Armenian community in Russia (Republic of Armenia, National Security Strategy). The basis for the strategic partnership between the two countries is the treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance and a political declaration. The aforementioned treaty was signed in 1997 in by the presidents Boris Yeltsin and Levon Ter-Petrosyan. The parties agreed to promote bilateral economic integration and make efforts to create a common economic space. They declared cooperation in the fields of politics, economy, military, science, culture and protection of the independence and security of both states. The treaty contains a clause concerning mutual assistance should one of the signatories be attacked or threatened by the military forces of another country. Both states agreed to continue their cooperation on the protection of the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Iranian borders. The treaty was signed for a period of 25 years (Cichocki, 1997, p. 6).

The strategy emphasised that, in view of the role of the United States in global and regional politics, Armenia maintains relations with this country. The US supported Armenia in its reforms, engaged in trade relations and is investing in it. There is a large Armenian community in the US, contributing to the maintenance of good relations between the partners. Armenia recognises the US efforts to maintain peace in the region and its participation in peace operations and contribution to combating terrorism and nuclear weapons proliferation.



The regional priorities of paramount importance for Armenia's security are the relationships with its neighbours and keeping peace in the region, contributing to the political and economic stability of the states. Among the regional directions of the security strategy of the Republic of Armenia are: developing bilateral and multilateral regional cooperation, resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and normalising the relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, consolidating democratic changes throughout the region and engaging in international economic projects.

Armenia sees its relations with Iran as particularly important, since they are based on historic and cultural ties of many centuries, and mutual economic interest, including energy cooperation. The second partner of Armenia is Georgia, connected by traditional economic cooperation ties and the possibility of using transit links across that country's territory. The absence of political relations with Turkey presents a threat to state security and negatively affects stability in the region<sup>1</sup> (Markarov, Galstyan & Hayrapetyan, 2017, pp. 111–113). Furthermore, the lack of relations with Azerbaijan and attempts to exclude Armenia from regional projects cause further deterioration of the relations between the countries and have a negative impact on regional stability.

As to the pan-Armenian dimension, the strategy emphasised the importance of Armenian community activities for security in the respective countries of its residence. Countries with the largest Armenian communities include the Russian Federation, the United States, France, Iran and Georgia. The Armenians living in those countries resist assimilation and create a bridge between the society of Armenia and its representatives in other countries (Republic of Armenia, National Security of Strategy).

As stated in the final part of the document, the strategy determines the main directions and priorities of the country's domestic and foreign policy, and its further revisions should address the internal, regional and global developments in accordance with the constitution of Armenia.

## **The Strategy vs. the Armenia's Policy**

Between 2007 and the end of 2016, Armenia's government successfully conducted a number of reforms indicated in the strategy. New codes of commercial, tax and financial law were adopted, which improved the conditions for conducting business in Armenia. In 2001, in cooperation with EBRD, a new company law was introduced, followed by a new bankruptcy law a few years later (Ekonomika Respubliki Armenja). Since 2010, EBRD has been providing support to Armenia with respect

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<sup>1</sup> Trade exchange is developing between Armenia and Turkey.



to legal security of the energy sector. In 2009 a judiciary reform was conducted, introducing a three-tier structure: courts of first instance, courts of appeal and the Court of Cassation. In 2010 a new public procurement act was adopted by Armenia. Nevertheless, the effects of these reforms are unsatisfactory. Following the financial transaction security audits in 2014, EBRD estimated that only 33% of entrepreneurs considered the Armenian courts to be impartial and regarded their judgements as fair (Business Reforms in Armenia). Some success has been achieved in combating corruption. In 2016 the parliament of Armenia adopted a law imposing penalties for illegal accumulation of wealth and by the end of 2016 the Armenian security service arrested five businesspeople for accepting bribes (Flight Assistant Corruption in Armenia).

The Strategic Program of Prospective Development of the Republic of Armenia 2014–2025 adopted by the government in March 2014 provides for a reform of the civil service. In 2010 the next stage of civil service reform was commenced, following two earlier stages completed in the years 2002–2005 and 2006–2009, respectively. Its effects include the implementation of an electronic civil servant information system and introduction of a new salary system. The objectives to be achieved in future include increasing the professionalism of civil servants, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of civil service (Republic of Armenia 2014–2025, Strategic Program of Prospective Development). These reforms indicate the pro-European path taken by the country but fail to guarantee its political stability. Since Armenia regained independence, there have been multiple political riots, chiefly in the capital city, organised by the opposition. Since 2008, during the presidency of Serzh Sargsyan, there have been several major disturbances in 2008, 2009 and 2012, but the president managed to alleviate the situation (Nieczuja-Ostrowski, 2012, p. 111). After a four-day war in April 2016, in July of that year an armed group attacked a police station, demanding the release of Zhirayr Selfiyan – opponent of president Serzh Sargsyan, criticising him for his excessive subservience to Russia. The attackers turned out to be veterans of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, enjoying the support of the crowd. The reasons for the clashes between the protesters and the police on the night of 20/21 July included: dissatisfaction with the government's Nagorno-Karabakh policy, increasing aversion towards Russia and progressive impoverishment of the society. The four-day war in Armenia proved that the government's policy does not guarantee national security. The proposal put forward by Russia during the Minsk negotiations in 2014, suggesting that the conflict be ended by handing over to Azerbaijan some of the land taken by the Armenian army in 1994 was unacceptable to the Armenian society and the president's attempts to pass it over generated outrage. The president tried to resolve the conflict by dismissing the prime minister Hovik Abrahamyan and replacing him with Karen





Karapetyan from the Republican Party of Armenia. Appointing a new prime minister was the ruling party's attempt at approaching the circles criticising it for the inefficient policy concerning Nagorno-Karabakh. The new prime minister, former CEO of the Russian-Armenian company ArmRos Gazprom and mayor of Yerevan in 2010–2011, who resigned that position after protests against a ban on street trade, may hold the new position until 2018. In December 2015, in a national referendum, the Armenian society approved a number of amendment to the constitution, changing the political system of Armenia from semi-presidential to parliamentary and passing some of the presidential prerogatives to the parliament and prime minister (Sahakyan, 2016). In 2018, at the end of his presidential term, Serzh Sargsyan may secure the position of prime minister.

With respect to its foreign policy, Armenia pursued the objectives of the strategy at three levels. At the international level, the main role was played by the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and political and military contacts between Russia and Armenia. In August 2011 a treaty between Russia and Armenia was signed, extending the lease on the Giumri base until 2044 (“Armenia zacieśnia współpracę z Rosją”). This means that the presence of the strategic ally increases the military power of the state in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan. Although the Russian government declared its non-involvement in a military conflict participated by Armenia, but this declaration cannot be taken for granted. Furthermore, analysis of the geographical distribution of Russian forces in Armenia indicates that this location was not selected at random. The Giumri base is near the Turkish border, and absence of relations between the two countries does not exclude a possible military clash with the Turkish neighbour. It may be concluded that this deployment of Russian troops might suggest the attempt to protect the country's eastern border. The activities of the Russian troops in Giumri involve patrolling the Armenian border area and, should a conflict arise, presumably a clash with a possible aggressor. Another benefit of the alliance with Russia is receiving supplies of Russian equipment at preferential prices, or sometimes even for free. Large amounts of weaponry, including tanks and armoured personnel carriers supplied by Russia, have been deployed in Nagorno-Karabakh, which increases the Armenian military potential and deters Azerbaijan from armed attacks. This way, Armenia may also avoid being accused of exceeding the weaponry limit set by the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. Because of the stationing of the Russian troops, Armenia may continue introducing weaponry to its territory without violating the provisions of the Treaty because Nagorno-Karabakh is not part of Armenia and therefore not subject to the limits. In December 2015 Armenia further tightened its contacts with Russia, signing a treaty on the common air defence system (“Armenia zacieśnia współpracę z Rosją”).





According to the National Security Strategy, the cooperation within the Collective Security Treaty Organization should be supplemented by the cooperation between Armenia and the United States, both at the bilateral level and as part of NATO. However, membership of the alternative Collective Security Treaty Organization excludes NATO membership. Armenia's participation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council does not oblige it to take further steps towards its NATO membership. However, in 2011 an individual partnership action plan was developed, spanning a period of two years and announcing military education reforms, combating terrorism and organised crime and introduction of crisis management procedures ("Partnerstwo na rzecz Bezpieczeństwa"). The next plan for partnership between NATO and Armenia for 2014–2016 provided for Armenia's cooperation with international anti-corruption organisations, raising the awareness of public officers, combating terrorism and organised crime and counteracting cyber-attacks. In the military sector, training in NATO defence standards was envisaged. To promote security in the region, Armenia agreed to make efforts towards the normalisation of its relations with Turkey and towards a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Individual Partnership Action Plan 2014–2016). In March 2016 a NATO–Armenia expert seminar was held in Yerevan, where the need was emphasised to cooperate with NATO with respect to the modernisation of armed forces and participation in a KFOR mission in Kosovo and a stabilisation mission in Afghanistan (Armenia–NATO, Seminarium Eksperckie).

Armenia aims to ensure the economic security, identified in the vertical approach by maintaining contacts with the CIS and European Union (Buzan, Weaver & de Wilde, 1998). Armenia is a founding member of CIS. It participates in the activities of ca. 70 sectoral cooperation institutions, aiming to support the member states in the area of economic and social development, humanitarian cooperation, and combating crime and terrorism. Compared to other CIS members, Armenia has a high unemployment rate – 18.1% at the end of 2016 ("UE Commonwealth of Independent States..."). It tries to solve its economic problems by signing agreements with the Russian Federation concerning access to its labour market. ("The Eurasian Economic Union...").

The contacts between the European Union and Armenia were established in mid-1990s. On 15 July 2010 Armenia began negotiations concerning an association agreement, and in 2013 an arrangement was agreed, constituting a fragment of the association agreement, concerning the establishment of an expanded free trade zone. In 2009 Armenia was included by the Eastern Partnership programme, aiming to bring the participating countries closer to the European Union by political association, economic integration and visa liberalisation. Nevertheless, in 2013, during a summit



of the Eastern Partnership in Vilnius, Armenia withdrew from signing the association agreement. (Gomółka & Borucińska-Dereszkiewicz, 2015, p. 56). This was due to Armenia's accession to the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and its declaration of accession to the Eurasian Economic Union. In December 2013 the president of Armenia did not exclude further dialogue with the European Union, praising its support for domestic reforms, but failed to mention the association agreement (Zasztowt, 2015, p. 123). In January 2014 the agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation became effective (Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas; Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation). According to Markarov, Galstyan and Hayrapetyan (2017, p. 132) Armenia is not interested in European Union membership, but maintains relations with the EU to intensify and diversify cooperation, expand trade with the member states and gain support for regional initiatives.

The decision taken by Armenia constitutes a success of Russian diplomacy and demonstrates that Armenia is closer to its traditional partner than to the EU, as stated in the Security Strategy. Russia has more means of exerting pressure on Armenia, using its position of a guarantor of Armenia's security in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Using its dominant position in the energy sector, in July 2013 Russia announced a 50% gas price increase for individual customers, which exacerbated the social dissatisfaction in Armenia. At the same time, it must be emphasised that the decision of Yerevan of November 2013 has led to further submission to Russia in terms of foreign and internal policy. Armenia's decision of the Customs Union accession offered it benefits in the form of a reduction in the price of Russian gas towards 2013 and increased Russian investments in infrastructure and energy industry. In 2007–2013 the Russian investments in Armenia reached USD 2.1 bn. Russia remains Armenia's leading trade partner. The Russian imports to Armenia include fuels, aluminium and cereals. In the energy sector Armenia is dependent on the supplies of natural gas and nuclear fuel from Russia, which is also interested in cooperation on the construction of another nuclear power station. The influence of this partner can also be observed in the banking, insurance and telecommunications sector (Markarov, Galstyan & Hayrapetyan, 2017, p. 124).

The formal integration of Armenia as part of the Eurasian Economic Union on 01 January 2015 has greatly increased its political and economic security. However, it deters Armenia from contacts with the European Union and constitutes a blow to the Eastern Partnership programme. The European Union did not give up further



talks with Armenia. On 12 October 2015 the Council authorised the European Commission and the High Representative to enter into negotiations with Armenia regarding a new agreement to replace the unsigned bilateral partnership and cooperation agreement. The negotiations started on 07 December 2015 (Rada Współpracy UE–Armenia). At the Cooperation Council session held on 16 January 2016 the European Union and the Republic of Armenia confirmed their intention to tighten and expand cooperation in all possible fields remaining in compliance with the new duties of Armenia arising from its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union. The European Union declared its support for the reform programme in Armenia and offered advice on the optimum utilisation of the financial assistance of EUR 140–170 million, chiefly earmarked for the development of the private sector and administration and judiciary reforms (Rada Współpracy UE–Armenia).

The relations between Armenia and USA are influenced by several factors connected with the South Caucasus region. The United States supported the process of normalisation of Turkish–Armenian relations and since 1998 has provided financial support to the region of Nagorno-Karabakh without recognising its independence. The USA, a global political actor, cooperates with Armenia on the defence sector reforms and efforts counteracting terrorism. American investors play an important role in the Armenian economy. The majority of American investment projects are connected with research and development. (Markarov, Galstyan & Hayrapetyan, 2017, p. 130)

In the spatial aspect, the subregional security of Armenia is guaranteed by its relations with Iran and Georgia and trade with Turkey. Despite the differences in terms of religion and outlook on the world, the relations between Armenia and Iran are still good. The Iranian–Armenian cooperation has an economic character. Iran is among the top ten trade partners and second largest (after Russia) exporter of petroleum and petroleum products. The cooperation between Iran and Armenia is particularly significant in the energy sector (Markarov, Galstyan & Hayrapetyan, 2017, p. 132). In 2007 the partners finished the construction of the Meghri-Kajaran gas pipeline and signed an agreement concerning the construction of a hydroelectric power station on the Aras river and an agreement eliminating trade barriers between the parties. This increased the trade exchange between the countries from USD 200 million in 2009 to 300 million in 2014. In 2014 both parties approved the construction of a new electricity transmission line from Armenia to Iran and increasing the gas supplies to Armenia. The project, planned to be completed in 2018, will triple the power transmitted to Iran. These measures are in line with the agreement signed by the partners in 2009, providing for boosting the trade in gas and electricity (“The Armenia–Iran Relationship...”).



Armenia's second partner is Georgia; both countries cooperate mainly in the area of services and energy. In 2012 Georgia was the ninth most important trade partner of Armenia, which was the second largest partner of Georgia. Armenia's exports to Georgia include building materials, glass, rubber, plastic products, agricultural products, machines and pharmaceuticals. Armenia imports food, nitrogen, timber, wood products and fertilisers ("Georgia and Armenia, economic relations"). In view of the conflict with Azerbaijan, the direction of the transport routes and absence of pipelines in the Armenian territory, the route across Georgia could meet its needs. The two countries have different attitudes to security issues. Armenia chose to participate in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and is monitoring Georgia's cooperation with Turkey and Azerbaijan, fearing a transport and communications blockade, whereas Georgia opted for the cooperation with the European Union and NATO (Nieczuja-Ostrowski, 2013, p. 48). Armenia does not recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, whereas Georgia wishes to remain neutral in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Bidzina Ivanishvili's coming to power resulted in the establishment of military collaboration between Georgia and Armenia, continued in 2015, expanding the cooperation in military education and increasing the security of border services (New prospects in Armenia–Georgia relations).

Despite the absence of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey, the two countries maintained trade cooperation. The Turkish exports to Armenia increased by 700% in 2001–2015. The main types of goods supplied by Turkey included electronic equipment and machinery. Reconciliation initiatives undertaken by the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan in 2008–2010 had limited success. Nevertheless, in 2008 Armenia and Turkey decided to make mutual concessions: Yerevan moderated its position on the genocide issue, whereas Ankara ceased to make normalisation conditional upon Armenia's concessions to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. However, in Armenia, and particularly in the seats of the diaspora, the policy pursued by president Sargsyan met with strong opposition. The violent protests in France and Lebanon did not prevent the parties from signing, in 2009, the protocols concerning the resumption of diplomatic relations and opening the border between the two countries. Although it took intense diplomatic efforts, signing the documents turned out to be an empty gesture. Since Azerbaijan threatened to withdraw its capital from Turkey and regarded the steps taken by Turkey as betrayal, Ankara adopted a more strict approach and demanded progress in the peace negotiations concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict if the provisions of the protocol were to be fulfilled. For Armenia, this meant interrupting the negotiation process (Falkowski, 2016, pp. 76–77). In September 2015 the president of the Constitutional Court of Armenia issued a declaration stating that until an appropriate compensation was received for the



Armenian genocide, the relations between Armenia and Turkey remained suspended, and any agreements signed were without effect (Markarov, Galstyan & Hayrapetyan, 2017, p. 114).

As to the pan-Armenian dimension, the strategy emphasised the importance of Armenian community activities for security in the respective countries of its residence. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the most numerous Armenian communities resided in Russia, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Lebanon, Ukraine and Greece (Ministry Diaspora of Republic of the Armenia). 140,000 Armenians live in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (The National Statistical Service of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic). The undisputed leader in the activities of the Armenian diaspora is the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, which established a number of Armenian schools, cultural, scouting and sports centres, aid associations and youth groups. ARF provides patronage for the Armenian Aid Association, Homenetmen (a sports organisation); it established the Armenian Youth Federation and includes student branches. In the United States, the strongest organisation lobbying for Armenia is the Armenian National Committee of America. ARF branches in Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, Great Britain, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iran, Israel, Russia, Switzerland, Syria and Uruguay played an important role in the campaign for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the governments and public opinion of these countries (Nieczuja-Ostrowski, 2013, p. 189).

## Final Remarks

The national security strategy adopted in 2007 provided a detailed definition of security and identified its domestic and external threats. The document indicated the following internal threats: decreased efficiency of public administration, loss of trust in the courts, slow progress of reforms, unequal access to health service and education, low degree of urbanisation and low rate of natural increase.

The key external threats to the Armenian state were considered to be the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the policy of Azerbaijan and Turkey, whose actions could result in a blockade of transport routes and obstacles to transit and trade. The most important goal of Armenia was to ensure subregional security. Armenia looked for military support in the region, indicating the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, whose signatories affirmed that aggression against one member state would be perceived as an aggression against the entire organisation.

The strategy revealed that Armenia pursues its foreign and security policy at three levels: international, regional and pan-Armenian. The following were indicated as first-level international activities: participation of the Armenian armed forces in

peace operations, combating terrorism, arms control, involvement in the efforts of international organisations, participation in the processes of European and post-Soviet integration Armenia's military security was considered to arise from military and political cooperation with Russia and participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Participation in this organization is seen as a means to guarantee security and supplies of military equipment, and to combat terrorism and trafficking in arms and drugs. Cooperation with NATO (without participation) and as part of OSCE, was not mentioned until later in the strategy document. The document emphasised that Armenia wishes to participate in the activities of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace programme.

The economic security, including energy security, was identified as the second pillar of security for Armenia. Armenia's participation in the efforts of international organisations –TRACECA and INOGATE – was designed to strengthen the latter aspect of security. Another economic security priority identified was to intensify the economic and trade connections with the European Union and Armenia's participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy as a step towards integration with European structures. As to bilateral relations, the most significant were Armenia's contacts with Georgia and Iran. If we compare the assumptions of the 2007 national security strategy with the policy pursued by Armenia, particularly those promoting external security, it is clear that the measures taken are in line with the provisions of that document. By the end of 2016 a number of reforms were carried through in Armenia, which succeeded in modernising the public administration. The performance of the public sector was improved thanks to the newly-adopted codes of commercial, tax and financial law and the judiciary sector reform. However, the most serious threat to Armenia – the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – remained unresolved. Russia reinforced its position as Armenia's strategic ally, obtaining a lease on the military base Giumri from the Armenian government until 2044. These efforts contributed to the improved military security by maintaining the Russian bases and increasing the amount of military equipment within that territory, thus discouraging the potential enemies. The Collective Security Treaty Organization remained the guarantor of Armenia's security at the multilateral level. The talks conducted between Armenia and NATO are of little significance in view of the obligations assumed by Armenia and did not lead to changes in its alliances. The same goes for the talks with the European Union after Armenia's withdrawal from signing the association agreement, and accession to the Eurasian Economic Union on January 1, 2015. These steps revealed the potential economic partners seen as guarantors of economic security. The subregional security was to be ensured by bilateral political and economic relations with Georgia and Iran. Following the rise to power of Bidzina Ivanishvili in Georgia, this relationship



was expanded by the cooperation in the area of education and border services. The hypothesis of the study: the strategy assumptions defined the threats to the state security, Armenia's strategic partners and the direction of its foreign policy has thus been confirmed. Since the adoption of the national security strategy in 2007, Armenia has made efforts to expand the economic cooperation with the European Union, thus increasing the number of parties having a direct impact on its economic security. The military security was associated with Russia and Collective Security Treaty Organization, with the approval of contacts with NATO.

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