

**ARMENIA****Thousands of residents are protesting in Yerevan**

Sustained protests involving thousands of residents have erupted in the Armenian capital Yerevan in support of the group the "Daredevils of Sassoun" which took control of a local police station on July 17th. The "Daredevils of Sassoun", a group whose name is inspired by the legend of medieval fighters of the same name, took several policemen hostage at the same time demanding the release of the anti-government activist Jirair Sefilian, and the resignation of President Serzh Sargsyan's government. Both Sefilian and the Daredevils have accused the Sargsyan of corruption and the use of illegitimate force against dissidents and protesters since his election in 2008. Yerevan's July protest follows on the heels of four consecutive summers of demonstrations in the capital that have seen residents take to the streets to rally against electricity price hikes and higher transportation fees.

It is the first time demonstrators have taken to the streets to demand the resignation of the government itself, and following the release of the hostages on the 23rd, negotiations are to be held between jailed activist Sefilian and the government. The government maintains, however, that negotiations will only be held upon the condition that the police station entering its 11th day of occupation by protesters is evacuated.

Armenian society is still reeling from the violence of ethnic conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan that erupted between the former Soviet bloc countries in the early 1990s. Armenia and Azerbaijan are currently locked in a diplomatic and military stalemate over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, a conflict in which many leaders of the "Daredevils of Sassoun" group fought.

This is an ongoing story and updates are forthcoming.

<http://goo.gl/3ZqE5C>

<http://goo.gl/OSlog6>

*by Larnell Smith*

**AZERBAIJAN****The fragile truce is breached again**

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry has accused rival and neighboring Armenia of breaching the fragile truce governing the conflict of the Nagorno-Karabakh region 18 times during a 24 hour period on July 15th. This latest accusation comes during a truce that has held since mid April ending several weeks of renewed fighting. The two countries have been in conflict over the region since the breakup of the Soviet Union and established a truce in 1994 following bloodshed that claimed the lives of between 20,000-30,000 people on both sides.

<https://goo.gl/U6W7nz>

**The Italian Minister of Education Stefania Giannini has met Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev**

In other news, the Italian Minister of Education Stefania Giannini has met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to discuss the education partnership between the two countries. Minister Giannini reportedly mentioned the importance of the "growing number of Azerbaijani students in Italy" and stressed the continuation of educational projects between the nations.

<https://goo.gl/XJBjoM>

*by Larnell Smith*

## Belarus

### **Belarus' cooperation with EU countries are getting more pragmatic**

Belarus' cooperation with the countries of the European Union is becoming more pragmatic than ever due to the current situation of the region. "Belarus will play the important role of security provider for the EU by helping to bring peace back to the unstable region. The EU will provide more opportunities for innovations and investment into the Belarusian economy, so that Belarus remains as the reliable guarantor of safety along its borders and creates no problems for the European Union which is going through tough times," Sergei Kizima emphasized. Belarus and Poland signed an agreement between the governments of Belarus and Poland on cooperation in education during the latest round of political consultations between the two ministries. During the consultations the sides also discussed a wide range of issues on the bilateral agenda including the current state of the political dialogue, development of economic cooperation, improvement of the legal framework, standing of Belarus' national minority in Poland and Poland's national minority in Belarus. The diplomats discussed the Belarus-EU dialogue and the cooperation in the Eastern Partnership.

<https://goo.gl/Wz3cul>

<https://goo.gl/cbfgNV>

*by Eleanora Vitale*

## Georgia

### **Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia became effective**

On the 1st of July, the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia became effective. The agreement aims to expand political and economic relations between Georgia and the EU by establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Therefore, Georgia's trade and economic growth will increase since the customs tariffs amongst others are removed. This will lead to Georgia's integration to the EU single market. Moreover, before signing the agreement, Georgia made commitments in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini and EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn welcomed the agreement and stressed its benefits for both sides.

<https://goo.gl/jRYDji>

*by Theresa Leppert*

## Moldova

### Moldova has committed to ambitious structural reforms

"I look forward to closer ties between the EU and the Republic of Moldova as a result of this Agreement entering fully into force. Together with the implementation of reforms in the country the agreement has the potential to help changing the lives of Moldovans for the better, to bring jobs, growth and stability" has been the statement of The High Representative/Vice-President, Federica Mogherini after the signature of the Association Agreement on the 1st of July. Under the Association Agreement, Moldova has committed to ambitious structural reforms in key areas such as democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, foreign and security policy, and trade and economic development. Increased cooperation on energy, transport, environmental protection, industrial cooperation, social development and protection, equal opportunities, consumer protection education, and youth and cultural cooperation is also foreseen.

<https://goo.gl/VKn3X1>

<https://goo.gl/7mSPrG>

*by Eleanora Vitale*

## Ukraine

### A journalist was killed by an explosive attached to his car

Just several days ago in July, the journalist Pavlo Scheremet, who is working for the newspaper „Ukrainska Pravda“ (Ukrainian Truth), was killed by an explosive attached to his car. While the prosecution began its work, a conclusion of this case is unlikely as the one in the death of Gongadse, founder of said newspaper, which was not been concluded 16 years ago. Scheremet was known for his involvement into investigations against Ukraine's powerful men and women.

<https://goo.gl/brpFF7>

In June, the proposed visa liberalisation agreement between Ukraine, Georgia, Kosovo, and the Schengen countries has been delayed. Among the reasons cited fear of increased criminality was striking as well as the general security threats arguing that the Schengen countries can not allow for more travelling freedom at times of rising terrorist actions and a looming refugee crisis. For Ukraine, however, this is a step back as the liberalisations of travelling regulations would have been a leap into the West felt by regular Ukrainians in their personal life. Moreover, the misconception held by some that the entire country is at war would have been disguised as the free visa agreement would have displayed the country as generally safe. Also Ukraine's youth and especially our fellow AEGEEans are strongly affected as they now need to keep engaging with Ukraine's bureaucracy in order to travel to SUs and other AEGEE events.

In May, Nadiya Savchenko was freed after being held as a prisoner by the Russian Federation for nearly two years as a part of a prisoner exchange between Ukraine and Russia. She was welcomed in Kyiv as a hero which is mostly needed for the public relations victory for president Petro Poroshenko. Savchenko has dominated news since then and became a delegate for Batkivshina party. She currently has the highest approval ratings among government officials and has made her wish to run for president public.

*by Filipp Trigub*

## **EaP Project News**

### **Third phase of the project is being established**

After the second phase of the AEGEE Eastern Partnership project ended in May this year, a new, highly motivated team was created to continue the work and establish a third phase of the project in October. We are already having amazing ideas! So stay tuned!

## **News from EaP antennae**

From the 11<sup>th</sup> until the 25<sup>th</sup> of July AEGEE-Tbilisi organized the Traveling Summer University "SU-Georgia on my mind". The participants explored Georgia by learning traditional folk songs and dances as well as the typical cuisine. Moreover, they visited various places that have historical and cultural values for Georgia.

Before the Summer University started, the organizers took part at a first aid training course provided by the Georgia Red Cross Society.

While the SU by AEGEE-Lviv and AEGEE-Krakow "Tale of the slavic twins" just ended, AEGEE-Kyiv's SU starts. The organisers are once again happy to welcome many participants in Ukraine showing them the country, culture and cuisine. Furthermore, pre-events for Agora Chisinau are already in the planning, in order to make this summer terrific.

The local of AEGEE-Chisinau is working for the organisation of the next fall Agora - Autumn Agora Chisinau 2016. The Agora will take place from the 12<sup>th</sup> till the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, 2016. The Moldovan local is happy to host our statutory event and to show their capital to all the AEGEEans. Besides, they are glad to inform all the network that the applications are open.

## Interview

**This month the AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project interviewed Maryam Mumladze, Vice-President of AEGEE-Tbilisi.**

**How would you describe the democratic progress in your country? (independent press, rule of law, rights of minorities)**

As Georgia is a developing country, a lot of changes occur in a short period of time. Of course, there are steps forward and backward, but it can definitely be said that democratic progress is obvious in Georgia. Georgia's NGOs, independent media, rule of law, rights of minorities are the priorities that government takes into consideration in the path towards democratic consolidation. It goes without saying that Georgia has a lot of challenges on that way, so people and government should do their best to achieve the goal - inevitable progress throughout the country.

**Do you get a good civic education at school?**

There is a subject at Georgian schools called "Civil education". Government has special programs to give the qualification to teachers in order to have the proper knowledge in that field of studies. What is more, I should definitely mention that in 2015, the subject "Civil Education" was added to the National Examinations as the optional one, therefore, Georgian schoolchildren now have the opportunity to pass that subject and continue studying at universities.

**Is your AEGEE local supported by the government or local institutions?**

As AEGEE is the NGO without specific commercial interests, the board and members of it try hard to find sponsors, funds to carry out the projects and events which are planned during the whole year. So AEGEE-Tbilisi is supported by some Georgian companies by their products/services.

**Do you, your friends and the members of your AEGEE local study abroad? Where?**

Yes, there are friends and members of AEGEE-Tbilisi who study abroad. For example, in France, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Estonia, Czech republic, Lithuania, the USA and etc.

**Is it easy for you to travel to the EU?**

There are "Visa Liberalisation Dialogues" between EU and three Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova), so for Georgia it will become easier to travel to the EU, yet nowadays Georgian citizens need visa to travel throughout the EU.



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# NEWSLETTER

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