



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

Brussels, 25.6.2025  
COM(2025) 333 final

2025/0181 (NLE)

Proposal for a

**COUNCIL DECISION**

**on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EU-Armenia  
Partnership Council**

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

### **1. SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PROPOSAL**

This proposal concerns the decision establishing the position to be taken on the Union's behalf in the EU-Armenia Partnership Council in connection with the envisaged adoption of the recommendation on the Partnership Agenda between the European Union and Armenia.

### **2. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL**

#### **2.1. The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement**

The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part ('the Agreement'), aims to enhance the comprehensive political and economic partnership and cooperation between the Parties based on common values and close links. The Agreement entered into force on 1 March 2021.

#### **2.2. The Partnership Council**

The Partnership Council was established in Article 362 of the Agreement. It supervises and regularly reviews the implementation of the Agreement. It consists of members of the Council of the European Union and members of the European Commission, on the one hand, and of members of the government of the Republic of Armenia, on the other.

#### **2.3. The envisaged act of the Partnership Council**

The Partnership Council is to adopt a recommendation on the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda ('the envisaged act').

The purpose of the envisaged act is to support the implementation of the Agreement by setting out joint priorities for EU-Armenia cooperation.

### **3. POSITION TO BE TAKEN ON THE UNION'S BEHALF**

The EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda will replace the existing EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities. The EU and Armenia have agreed to consolidate their partnership and raise their cooperation to a new level of ambition, building on the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, by setting updated priorities in a Partnership Agenda.

The Partnership Agenda sets out concrete objectives for EU-Armenia cooperation, divided into short-term (3-4 years) and medium-term (7 years) priorities. The priority actions will focus on promoting economic development and diversification, enhancing regulatory alignment, and strengthening Armenia's resilience across all sectors. They range from democracy and human rights, internal security, trade, economic and broad sectoral cooperation to mobility and people-to-people contacts. Importantly, the Partnership Agenda also covers security and defence, expanding the existing scope of EU-Armenia cooperation.

The Union needs to establish its position on the Partnership Agenda to facilitate the full implementation of the Agreement and guide bilateral cooperation.

## **4. LEGAL BASIS**

### **4.1. Procedural legal basis**

#### *4.1.1. Principles*

Article 218(9) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides for decisions establishing ‘*the positions to be adopted on the Union’s behalf in a body set up by an agreement, when that body is called upon to adopt acts having legal effects, with the exception of acts supplementing or amending the institutional framework of the agreement.*’

The concept of ‘*acts having legal effects*’ includes acts that have legal effects by virtue of the rules of international law governing the body in question. It also includes instruments that do not have a binding effect under international law, but that are ‘*capable of decisively influencing the content of the legislation adopted by the EU legislature*’<sup>1</sup>.

#### *4.1.2. Application to the present case*

The Partnership Council is a body set up by an agreement, namely the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement.

The act which the Partnership Council is called upon to adopt constitutes an act having legal effects. The envisaged act has legal effects because the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda will be the basis for the programming of EU assistance, including under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, established by Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The envisaged act does not supplement or amend the institutional framework of the Agreement. Therefore, the procedural legal basis for the proposed decision is Article 218(9) TFEU.

### **4.2. Substantive legal basis**

#### *4.2.1. Principles*

The substantive legal basis for a decision under Article 218(9) TFEU depends primarily on the objective and content of the envisaged act in respect of which a position is taken on the Union's behalf. If the envisaged act pursues two aims or has two components and if one of those aims or components is identifiable as the main one, whereas the other is merely incidental, the decision under Article 218(9) TFEU must be founded on a single substantive legal basis, namely that required by the main or predominant aim or component.

With regard to an envisaged act that simultaneously pursues a number of objectives, or that has several components, which are inseparably linked without one being incidental to the other, the substantive legal basis of a decision under Article 218(9) TFEU must include, exceptionally, the various corresponding legal bases.

#### *4.2.2. Application to the present case*

The main objective and the content of the envisaged act relate to association with third countries, in particular to furthering the implementation of the aims and objectives of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia. The measures whose adoption is envisaged concern, generally, all the areas covered by the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and aim at further implementing and deepening the partnership between the Parties. It follows that the field within

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<sup>1</sup> Judgment of the Court of Justice of 7 October 2014, Germany v Council, C-399/12, ECLI:EU:C:2014:2258, paragraphs 61 to 64.

which the decision falls must be determined in the light of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement as a whole.

Therefore, the substantive legal basis of the proposed decision is Articles 91, 100(2), 207 and 209 TFEU.

#### **4.3. Conclusion**

The legal basis of the proposed decision should be Articles 91, 100(2), 207 and 209 TFEU, in conjunction with Article 218(9) TFEU.

#### **5. PUBLICATION OF THE ENVISAGED ACT**

As the act of the Partnership Council will replace Recommendation No 1/2017 of 20 November 2017 on the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities, it is appropriate to publish it in the *Official Journal of the European Union* after its adoption.

Proposal for a

## **COUNCIL DECISION**

### **on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EU-Armenia Partnership Council**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 91, 100(2), 207 and 209, in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part ('the Agreement') was concluded by the Union by Council Decision 2018/104<sup>2</sup> and entered into force on 1 March 2021.
- (2) To facilitate the application of the Agreement, the Parties have agreed to establish a Partnership Agenda listing priorities for their joint work broken down by sector.
- (3) The Partnership Agenda sets out concrete objectives for EU-Armenia cooperation, divided into short-term (3-4 years) and medium-term (7 years) priorities. The priority actions focus on promoting economic development and diversification, enhancing regulatory alignment and strengthening Armenia's resilience across all sectors.
- (4) Pursuant to Article 362(6) of the Agreement, the Partnership Council may adopt recommendations for the purpose of attaining the objectives of the Agreement.
- (5) The Partnership Council is to adopt a recommendation on the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda in person at the next EU-Armenia Partnership Council or by written procedure.
- (6) The envisaged recommendation will have legal effects.
- (7) It is therefore appropriate to establish the position to be taken on the Union's behalf in the Partnership Council, as the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda should be the basis for the programming of EU assistance, including under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe which was established by Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- (8) The position of the Union within the Partnership Council should therefore be based on the attached draft Recommendation.

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<sup>2</sup> OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, p. 1–3

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

*Article 1*

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf in the EU-Armenia Partnership Council shall be based on the draft act of the Partnership Council attached to this Decision.

*Article 2*

This Decision shall enter into force on [...].

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council  
The President*



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

Brussels, 25.6.2025  
COM(2025) 333 final

ANNEX

**ANNEX**

*to the*

**Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION**

**on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EU-Armenia  
Partnership Council**

**RECOMMENDATION No XX/2025**  
**OF THE EU-ARMENIA PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL**  
**of dd/mm/2025**  
**on the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda**

THE EU-ARMENIA PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part,

Whereas:

- (1) The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part ('the Agreement') was signed on 24 November 2017 and entered into force on 1 March 2021.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 362(6) of the Agreement, the Partnership Council may adopt recommendations for the purpose of attaining the objectives of the Agreement.
- (3) Pursuant to Article 377(1) of the Agreement, the Parties are to take any measures required to fulfil their obligations under the Agreement and are to ensure that the objectives set out in the Agreement are attained.
- (4) Article 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Partnership Council provides for the possibility of taking decisions and making recommendations by written procedure between sessions if both Parties so agree.
- (5) The Union and Armenia have agreed to consolidate their partnership by agreeing on a set of priorities for the joint work towards achieving the objectives as set out in the Agreement.
- (6) The Parties to the Agreement have agreed on the text of the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda, which will support the implementation of the Agreement, focusing cooperation on commonly identified shared interests,

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION:

*Article 1*

The Partnership Council recommends that the Parties implement the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda, as set out in the Annex.

*Article 2*

The EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda, as set out in this Recommendation, shall replace Recommendation No 1/2017 of the EU-Armenia Cooperation Council of 20 November 2017 on the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities.



*Article 3*

This Recommendation shall take effect on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, [day month year].

*For the Partnership Council*

*The Chair*

## **ANNEX**



### **PARTNERSHIP AGENDA BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ARMENIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

The **EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** was signed in November 2017 and entered into force on 1 March 2021, as the core document on EU-Armenia relations and a blueprint for democratic institution-building in Armenia.

To facilitate cooperation between the EU and Armenia, the **EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities** were adopted on 21 February 2018. Based on shared interests and common values, the Partnership Priorities have helped to shape the agenda for regular political dialogue meetings and sectoral dialogues as set out in the CEPA, which provides the framework for implementing and monitoring the priorities.

On 26-27 October 2023, the **European Council** invited the High Representative and the Commission to present options on how best to **strengthen EU-Armenia relations in all their dimensions**. This follows a clear expression by the Armenian authorities of their wish to strengthen EU-Armenia relations, as also reflected in the law on the launch of the process of Armenia's accession to the European Union. It also demonstrates the strong wish of the EU to seize the current momentum to enhance EU-Armenia relations. In the margins of the European Political Community meeting in Granada on 5 October 2023, the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister of Armenia also expressed their determination to strengthen economic ties and harness the CEPA's full potential. On 13 November 2023 the **Foreign Affairs Council** agreed to (i) strengthen the civilian EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) under the common security and defence policy (CSDP), with more observers and patrols, including in sensitive areas; (ii) look into the possibility of providing non-lethal support to Armenia under the European Peace Facility (EPF); (iii) start exploring possibilities of launching a visa liberalisation dialogue; and (iv) identify further support measures by means of a Commission services-EEAS joint fact-finding mission. Since then, these actions have been achieved. The fact-finding mission confirmed both sides' ambition to strengthen cooperation, including working together in new areas such as security and defence, closer collaboration in sectors such as transport, energy and digital connectivity, trade, research and innovation, and stepping up investments under the Global Gateway. This is in line with the EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea region, adopted on 28 May 2025. Specific attention will also be paid to addressing the needs and supporting the socio-economic inclusion of

Armenians displaced following Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh (hereafter Armenian displaced persons and/or Refugees).

Both the EU and Armenia have an interest in and are committed to strengthening and deepening relations, as **confirmed at the fifth EU-Armenia Partnership Council** on 13 February 2024. In line with this, the objective of the EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda is to establish more ambitious joint priorities for cooperation across all dimensions to achieve the objectives of the CEPA in line with the European aspirations of the people of Armenia.

The **EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda** replaces and refocuses the existing Partnership Priorities, building on the CEPA. It distinguishes between short-term priorities (which should be implemented or on which significant progress should be made within 3-4 years) and medium-term priorities (which should be implemented or on which significant progress should be made within 7 years). The Partnership Agenda will apply from the moment of its adoption by the EU-Armenia Partnership Council. It may be amended or updated at any time by agreement of the Partnership Council.

## **1. PRINCIPLES, INSTRUMENTS AND RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PARTNERSHIP AGENDA**

Based on shared interests and common values, the following principles will guide the implementation of this Partnership Agenda.

- Action taken through the Partnership Agenda should fully comply with the **CEPA**, including its preamble.
- The Partnership Agenda should be implemented **transparently, accountably and inclusively**.
- The Partnership Agenda requires engagement from both sides and dialogue on CEPA-related **reforms**.
- The Partnership Agenda aims to achieve tangible and defined results through the progressive implementation of **practical measures**.

- The parties recognise the importance of supporting the implementation of the agreed priorities through political commitment and appropriate **technical and financial means**.
- The **implementation** of the Partnership Agenda will be **monitored**, reported on annually and assessed. Progress will be reviewed, including in the context of the institutional structures listed in the CEPA. Civil society will also be encouraged to focus its monitoring activities on the Partnership Agenda, including in the context of the EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform.
- The EU will help Armenia achieve the objectives and implement the priorities set out in the Partnership Agenda. It will do so by using all available sources of **EU support**, as well as expertise and advice, best practice, information sharing, support for capacity building, institutional strengthening and assistance instruments. The EU will also work with like-minded partners to ensure the coordination of support for Armenia and ensure a Team Europe approach pooling resources from the EU, its Member States, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and other interested partners. The relevant EU financial instruments will help with the implementation of the Partnership Agenda. However, the agenda is not in itself a financial programming document and does not replace the programming done by the parties themselves.

The Partnership Agenda is the **basis of the EU assistance** to Armenia, as outlined in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the corresponding programming documents. The EU may also provide assistance using other EU instruments. The EU's support, reflecting its conditionality- and incentive-based approach, will be conditional on the implementation of agreed reforms. To help achieving priorities in the Partnership Agenda, the European Commission put forward the **Resilience and Growth Plan**, an assistance package of EUR 270 million for the period 2024-2027. Under the Resilience and Growth Plan, the EU will provide (1) EUR 200 million in grants assistance to support a socio-economic reform agenda and closer sectoral cooperation with the EU, and (2) EUR 70 million in investment grants with the aim to mobilise public and private investments in trade, energy and

transport connectivity and strengthening the private sector. The assistance is also reinforcing the EU engagement with the Black Sea region, as reflected in the EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea region.

## 2. PRIORITIES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGENDA

The EU commends Armenia's commitment to **democracy, the rule of law and human rights** and tangible progress in this regard, recognising the highly challenging regional situation Armenia is currently facing. It commends Armenia's commitment to ensuring it has democratic institutions that function properly, with the CEPA as a blueprint for reforms to modernise the country. Crucial priorities are **socio-economic development, trade diversification, sustainability and building resilience**, addressing the geopolitical and regional challenges as well as targeted hybrid and other threats. The **Visa Liberalisation Dialogue** is also an important joint priority. The process aims to support Armenia in achieving a visa-free regime for short-term stays with the EU and within the Schengen area, provided that the relevant conditions for well-managed mobility and security are put in place. Armenia has made **significant progress on reforms** in key areas such as justice, the fight against corruption and maintaining the rule of law, freedom of speech and media freedom, police reforms and strengthening democratic institutions (by setting up the Ministry of Internal Affairs, for example), and on reforms in education, health, social protection, migration and civil protection. The **regional security situation** remains volatile. This Partnership Agenda includes **security and defence** as a new area of cooperation, aiming to strengthen Armenia's **resilience, security and stability**. For instance, in 2024, the EU adopted the first ever assistance measure in support of the Armenian Armed Forces under the European Peace Facility. The EU stands ready to support Armenia in this regard. **Addressing the needs and inclusion of more than 115 000** Armenian displaced persons into the socio-economic system will require further attention in the coming years.

**Human rights and gender equality** will be mainstreamed throughout the Partnership Agenda.

This Partnership Agenda supports **economic, trade and energy diversification** and further **regulatory alignment** in key sectors (where compatible with Armenia's membership of and obligations to other international organisations) to create conditions for closer economic

cooperation. It also aims to strengthen cooperation in sectors that are crucial for Armenia's **socio-economic resilience** and to step up **investments**.

Further **considerable and sustainable progress** on CEPA implementation is also needed for citizens to reap its full benefits. In particular, Armenia will continue its efforts to improve internal coordination and absorption capacities and consolidate reforms. The EU is willing to intensify its cooperation with the Armenian authorities on the **implementation of the CEPA**. To this end, it encourages the strategic use of available instruments, such as Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) and Twinning, and relevant bilateral and regional initiatives. Armenia will work closely with international financial institutions and the EU to identify and implement strategic investment projects in the framework of the Global Gateway, as the EU brand for investments, including through the EU-Armenia Investment Coordination Platform, which brings Armenian authorities, the EU and IFIs together to facilitate investments in Armenia, promoting sustainable development and economic growth.

This Partnership Agenda will **complement the Eastern Partnership policy framework**, which remains a valuable vehicle for strengthening EU-Armenia relations and for regional cooperation in areas of common interest. EU-Armenia cooperation will **support the achievement of global policy objectives**, including the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Cooperation will contribute to strengthening the **international rules-based order** and help make Europe stronger on the world stage. In this context, the following areas of reform should be addressed as a matter of priority.

### ***2.1. Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance***

The EU and Armenia are committed to strengthen cooperation to **promote the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms**, as laid down in the CEPA. They will work together to continuously improve Armenian public administration, ensure good governance and reform the justice sector. Political dialogue and reform cooperation under this Partnership Agenda seek to strengthen respect for democratic principles such as the separation of powers, political pluralism, inclusion in decision-making and cooperation and positive engagement with the opposition. The EU and Armenia will work together to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, including for Armenian displaced persons and persons belonging to minorities as



enshrined in the core UN and Council of Europe conventions and related protocols, ratified by Armenia as well as to effectively execute the judgments of the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. They will also contribute to consolidating domestic political reforms, including through support for the Council of Europe's Action Plan for Armenia.

#### *2.1.1. Democracy*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue to ensure **transparent, inclusive, free and fair elections**, and act on the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in line with the Armenian constitution.
- Ensure that legislative amendments affecting key aspects of the rule of law are subject to comprehensive and inclusive consultations and are brought into line with European standards and recommendations made by international bodies, such as the Council of Europe's **Venice Commission, the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the OSCE/ODIHR**, also considering recommendations by other actors such as the Open Government Partnership.
- Ensure that legislative and **constitutional reforms** are transparent and inclusive, based on democratic principles and the rule of law, and involve main stakeholders, including civil society.

##### **Medium-term priority**

- Continue **strengthening Armenia's human rights framework** by harmonising and implementing international and European human rights law and practices.

#### *2.1.2. Justice*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue reforming **the justice sector**, ensuring its independence, integrity, accountability, quality and efficiency, in line with the Armenian Constitution and international standards.
- Implement the **judicial and legal reforms strategy and action plan for 2022-2026** in a coordinated manner, making adjustments when necessary, and ensure appropriate follow-up by the **Monitoring Council**.
- Effectively implement the revised **Criminal Code** and **Criminal Procedure Code**, including through training and capacity building for relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure consultation of the **Venice Commission** and implementation of its recommendations.
- Continue to ensure transparency and objectiveness, adequate reasoning, and proportionality and the use of merit-based criteria where applicable, in decisions regarding the **selection, appointment, appraisal, promotion, transfer of all judges and prosecutors**, including in high-level positions, as well as in the **disciplinary system** concerning them, by strengthening the regulatory and institutional framework.
- Continue to enhance transparency, meritocracy and objectiveness in the **selection and appointment methods** for the members of the **judicial and prosecutorial governance bodies** and in the **decision-making processes** of these bodies and introduce or strengthen safeguards to depoliticise those processes.
- Increase **efficiency** in the justice sector by, i.a. enhancing the use of out of court settlement/alternative dispute resolution, including through mediation and arbitration and with the involvement of the Arbitration and Mediation Centre (AMCA), with support of institutional partners.
- Ensure **mandatory initial training** as well as **continued training and capacity building** for all judges and prosecutors, including specialised training on jurisprudence of, and engagement with International Courts.
- Enhance the **performance evaluation** for judges and prosecutors, including through the application of clear and objective evaluation criteria and the provision of regular assessments.
- Provide sufficient resources to all justice institutions to enable them to perform their

functions effectively, including the **Corruption Prevention Commission** and the anticorruption courts.

- Ensure accountability in the justice sector, including through a **robust disciplinary framework**, also for members of the judicial and prosecutorial governance bodies, in line with international standards.
- Ensure full implementation of the international agreement with the EU on **cooperation with Eurojust** in order to enhance judicial cooperation in criminal matters and expand cooperation of relevant Armenian agencies and authorities with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (the EPPO).
- As regards judicial cooperation in civil matters, accede to and implement the relevant conventions of **The Hague Conference on Private International Law**.

### **Medium-term priorities**

- **Strengthen the institutional structures dealing with judicial cooperation**, especially central authorities, and the prosecutorial and judicial bodies dealing with international cases, and ensure that adequate training and support is given.
- Continue strengthening the **Justice Academy's** capacities, ensure that the Academy's status and functioning is aligned with European standards including to European judicial training standards, and contribute to the inclusion of the Academy in the relevant European judicial networks.
- Maintain and further improve **communication with the public** in order to explain how judicial and security sector reforms and other key reforms benefit everyone, and to increase public trust in the system.
- Improve data collection and efficient justice sector management through the use of **e-justice** tools.
- Enhance the institutional capacities for **justice sector budget** preparation and implementation.

#### *2.1.3. Anti-corruption, the fight against fraud, public administration reform and*

### **Short-term priorities**

- Ensure the effective implementation of Armenia's **anti-corruption strategy and action plan for 2023-2026**, in line with the GRECO's recommendations and the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-Corruption Network.
- Strengthen the functions of anti-corruption and integrity-related institutions: the **Corruption Prevention Commission**, the **Anti-Corruption Committee**, the specialised **Anti-Corruption Court of First Instance**, the **Anti-Corruption Chamber of the Court of Cassation** and the **Anti-Corruption Court of Appeal**.
- Further improve the existing **whistleblowing** mechanisms and whistleblowers' protection guarantees.
- Ensure the continuity and effective implementation of **public administration and open government reforms**, in line with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/European Union joint Support for Improvement in Government and Management (SIGMA) Initiative's Principles of Public Administration and other relevant European best practices. This includes conducting a baseline assessment of the public administration system of the Republic of Armenia. Ensure the implementation of the "Open Government Partnership-Armenia" agenda/action plan.
- Implement tailored capacity enhancement **trainings for civil servants** on how to implement sustainable reforms and deliver evidence-based and inclusive policies.
- To increase public trust towards democratic institutions, continue to strengthen the delivery of **citizen-centered public services** both at the central and community levels. Ensure accessibility of those services to all groups of society. Utilise digital tools to increase public participation, access to information, and engagement opportunities, ensuring adherence to civic space principles.
- Expand cooperation of relevant Armenian agencies and authorities the **European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**.

## Medium-term priorities

- Introduce **educational programmes** covering ethics, integrity and corruption prevention at pre-school institutions, public schools and universities and create an anti-corruption education platform where teachers can share their teaching experiences, successful lesson plans and methods. Further develop anti-corruption standards for training programmes for public servants and public office holders, including law enforcement, prosecution and judiciary and make such training mandatory.
- Develop **standard protocols** for investigating corruption crimes and improve the mechanisms for non-conviction-based asset forfeiture.
- Based on the new baseline assessment of Armenia's public administration system conducted by SIGMA, design a **new strategic document for the public sector reform** in the country and ensure its effective implementation.

### *2.1.4. Human rights and fundamental freedoms*

## Short-term priorities

- Continue implementing the **national human rights action plan 2023-2025** and develop a successor action plan, incorporating the recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms, in particular treaty bodies, the OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and international human rights organisations, as appropriate.
- Continue strengthening the role of the **Ombudsperson/Human Rights Defender** and allocate adequate resources to ensure his/her active participation in policy-making and the implementation of legislative reforms; promoting the development of normative legal acts; issuing recommendations to strengthen the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights in specific spheres; encouraging the ratification of regional and international human rights instruments; and contributing to raising awareness of human rights.
- Ensure the implementation of the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal**

**Court (ICC)** and continue the steps required to harmonise legislation according to ICC requirements. Ensure that there are the necessary financial resources to work with the ICC, as well as specialised training for staff.

- Develop **capabilities and knowledge** of judges, prosecutors and investigators on the rules and procedures of the ICC.

### Medium-term priorities

- Maintain effective **dispute settlement and human rights protection mechanisms**, to be used before resorting to, or as an alternative to, judicial mechanisms.
- Continue to cooperate on the **promotion, awareness-raising of and training** on human rights, in particular non-discrimination, in the judiciary, law enforcement and all public administration, including in Armenia's regions.
- Continue to cooperate and meaningfully consult with **civil society organisations** and representative social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) as stakeholders and watchdogs in areas the CEPA prioritises.

#### 2.1.5. *Ill-treatment and torture*

### Short-term priorities

- Monitor and address any occurrences of ill-treatment and torture by law-enforcing agents and the **armed forces**. Ensure transparency in the investigation process and accountability for such acts.
- Ensure full implementation of criminal justice legislation, notably the amended **Criminal Code** and **Criminal Procedure Code**, in accordance with European human rights standards and the Council of Europe's recommendations.
- Continue **improving penitentiary legislation** as part of broader criminal justice reform, and contribute to effective restorative justice and purpose-based sentencing.
- Further **improve detention conditions** for inmates with disabilities and for minors, and take the specific needs of inmates in vulnerable situations into account, without any kind of discrimination.

## Medium-term priorities

- Continue to improve the penitentiary healthcare system and ensure prisoners have access to the same **healthcare services** as the general public, including mental health services. Continue training healthcare staff working in or for closed institutions on how to report ill-treatment, and continue giving them the means to do so.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of the **internal and external monitoring** of the penitentiary system, the police, the military and other closed institutions for the early detection and prevention of abuse and ill-treatment.

### *2.1.6. Equality and non-discrimination*

## Short-term priorities

- Continue taking decisive steps to ensure **equality for all and to combat discrimination on any grounds**, including when directed at women and girls, persons belonging to national, religious and other minorities, persons with disabilities, younger or older persons and LGBTI persons, in social, political and economic life. In doing so it is fundamental to pay specific attention to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Reinforce and ensure the implementation of the **Law on Equality** and the establishment of an independent **national equality body** with the necessary human and financial resources.
- Undertake further measures to ensure that **hate crimes**, including against LGBTI persons, are **prevented, investigated and punished** through all appropriate measures, include the recognition of bias motives as aggravated circumstances, and ensure that an adequate legal framework is in place.
- Continue reviewing the legal framework in order to strengthen the implementation of legislation against **domestic and gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation** contribute to awareness raising, and further ensure that victims of human trafficking and exploitation and survivors of domestic and gender-based violence have access to justice, effective protection measures, health services and redress.

- Establish a mechanism for referring people to **specialised services**, while ensuring the protection of confidentiality for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and ensuring the timely issuance of protective order decisions.
- Contribute to further improvement and diversification of **support centre services** for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence.
- Ensure the implementation of programmes to promote the **economic empowerment** of survivors of domestic and gender-based violence.
- Further strengthen the gender equality legal and policy framework by efficiently implementing the **Armenian gender strategy**, with the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as the national body for monitoring and implementation gender equality policies. Explore the creation of gender focal points in sectoral ministries of Armenia, as a good practice.
- Contribute to the further improvement of the **national mechanism for advancing gender equality**, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all in all spheres of public life.
- Act on the opinion of the Venice Commission following the signature of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (**the Istanbul Convention**).
- Continue addressing **discrimination against persons with disabilities**, including barriers to effective pain treatment and palliative care, and to take decisive steps on deinstitutionalisation in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Effectively implement the 2023-2027 comprehensive plan for the **social inclusion** of persons with disabilities and measures to ensure their implementation.
- Ensure the **draft Law on National Minorities** is adopted and implemented, taking into account the opinion of the Council of Europe.

### Medium-term priorities

- Take active steps to promote **full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women**, as well the participation and representation of **persons**



**belonging to minorities** in political decision-making fora and in the labour market and economic activities, including at local representation level (i.e. municipalities) and in law enforcement agencies.

- Take steps to develop **gender-responsive approaches** to climate change, ensuring inclusive principles and awareness raising.
- Take further measures to advance the reconciliation of **work-life balance** and take further steps to reform **the social protection system** to improve the extent and type of female labour market participation, including additional programmes to support caregivers, single mothers and any person in a situation of vulnerability.
- Take active steps to promote **equal sharing of responsibilities** between parents in childcare, developing parental skills and abilities.
- Continue working on improving the **gender equality index**, reducing the gender pay gap and overcoming discrimination in the field of education and science.
- Contribute to greater social and economic **inclusion and participation of persons belonging to national minorities**, including through access to information and education.
- Expand the provision of community-based services provided to **persons with disabilities**.
- Provide **independent living** services with a view to deinstitutionalisation.
- Take active steps to develop and implement **gender-responsive budgets**, working on **data disaggregation** based on gender-responsive approaches.

#### *2.1.7. Rights of the child*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Strengthen the rights of the child, including in the context of the **2023-2025 human rights strategy and action plan**, and finalise the comprehensive review and implementation of the **Law on Social Assistance, the Law on Children's Rights and the Family Code**.
- Implement the revised **Law on Children's Rights** and the **Family Code**, in line with

the comprehensive programme for the protection of children's rights.

- Step up implementation of the **Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse**.
- Take further steps to ensure housing, nutrition, access to education and healthcare for **displaced children**, and pay greater attention to the mental health of children affected by conflict.
- Expand community programmes for **children in vulnerable situations** (children with disabilities, children exposed to violence, bullying).
- Prevent abuse, violence and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of **children within institutions**, hold records of suspected and confirmed cases of violence and fully investigate all cases of alleged violence in order to identify and punish offenders.
- Further improve the **educational opportunities of children belonging to national minorities** and take measures to **prevent child early or forced marriage**.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Take steps towards social and behavioural transformation in **combating violence against children**. Raise the awareness of people working with children on how to prevent and combat violence against children, and build their knowledge about how to prevent and combat it. Raise the public's awareness of, and knowledge about how to, prevent and combat violence against children.
- Increase the capacity of **social protection specialists**.
- Continue working towards the **deinstitutionalisation** of children, including children with disabilities and children in poverty, including by introducing targeted alternative care delivery services and respective social assistance measures.

#### *2.1.8. Core labour standards and trade union rights*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Take further steps to develop the system of **labour inspection** so it complies with

international standards, to strengthen the capacity of labour inspectors, and to raise awareness of the importance of labour inspectors and the role of the Health and Labour Inspection Body. Provide the Health and Labour Inspection Body with sufficient powers and resources to carry out inspections and outreach to prevent and detect cases of labour exploitation trafficking.

- Continue implementing amendments to the **Labour Code** in line with international standards (such as the International Labour Organization's fundamental conventions, as well as the principles of the Global Coalition for Social Justice).
- Continue working on the mechanism defining and banning any type of **harassment** (including sexual harassment) in the workplace.
- Take further steps to revise the existing laws on trade unions and employers' unions relating to **freedom of association and collective bargaining**, in consultation with social partners and taking into account the comments of the International Labour Organization's supervisory bodies.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- **End formal restrictions** (including, but not limited to, those imposed by the Unified Social Services) to ensure that all platforms for the provision of social services, including job-seeking platforms, are fully accessible to **persons with disabilities**.

#### *2.1.9. Social policy and socio-economic inclusion of Armenian displaced persons*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Provide the necessary tools and ensure the **protection of the rights and the socio-economic inclusion of Refugees and Armenian displaced persons** and their access to essential services.
- Ensure the adoption and implementation of targeted **demographic and employment strategies**, taking into account specific vulnerabilities (gender, age, disability).
- Ensure the access of Refugees and Armenian displaced persons to the **national healthcare and education system** and addressing legal and administrative barriers.
- Ensure the adoption and implementation of the Strategy and Action plan of the

**Migration Policy** of the Republic of Armenia, the Regulation of Integration and Reintegration Issues.

- Ensure the implementation of **housing programmes**, such as social housing and rent reimbursement for the most vulnerable Refugee families.
- Ensure access to **high quality social services** through certified social workers with application of the developed social case management system, including new social services such as social patronage for vulnerable and disadvantaged Refugee families.

### **Medium-term priorities**

- Strengthen **social service delivery mechanisms**, by also enhancing shock-responsive capacities.
- Implement comprehensive programmes to **empower Refugees**, focusing on their socio-economic inclusion and entry into Armenia's labour market, including through the provision of reskilling, training, professional placement, livelihood programmes and civic orientation programs, language courses, access to long-term and sustainable housing solutions and public services access.

#### ***2.2. Freedom, Mobility and Security***

A number of working arrangements and cooperation agreements govern **enhanced EU-Armenia cooperation in justice and home affairs**, including agreements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex (since 2012, revision upcoming), the European Migration Network (EMN, 2021), Europol (2021), the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL, 2017) and Eurojust (2024).

The launch of the **visa liberalisation dialogue** on 9 September 2024 constitutes an important step forward in enhancing EU-Armenia cooperation in the area of freedom, mobility and security. This Partnership Agenda will support the good and effective implementation of the dialogue and its benchmarks. The language in this document is without prejudice to the final formulation of the benchmarks in the visa liberalisation action plan. The EU will continue to support Armenia's efforts to **strengthen the institutional framework and capacity** of the relevant Armenian

authorities in the area of mobility, management and security, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its subordinate bodies. Armenia will furthermore continue initiatives to **improve the public perception** of the Ministry by enhancing the quality of public services it provides and deepening public communication.

#### *2.2.1 Protection of Personal Data*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Take measures to further improve the **legislative framework** on data protection, including in the law enforcement sector, and **strengthen the independence** of the Armenia's Personal Data Protection Agency **and its capacity** to monitor and address data protection issues.
- Further ensure a high level of protection of personal data and enact legislation in accordance with EU and Council of Europe standards. Guarantee respect for the **right to personal data protection** in both the public and private sectors.

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Continue strengthening the **capacity of the Personal Data Protection Agency** and ensure a high level of protection of personal data.

#### *2.2.2 Migration, Asylum and Integrated Border Management*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue effectively implementing the **EU-Armenia Visa Facilitation Agreement** and **EU-Armenia Readmission Agreement**, as reported in the respective Joint Committees set up on foot of those agreements. The effective implementation of the agreements will continue being a fundamental factor for progress in the **visa liberalisation dialogue**.
- Further strengthen Armenia's **migration management system**, operated by the Migration and Citizenship Service in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other bodies dealing with migration. Ensure evidence-based migration and Refugee protection policies, and that the systems and practices in place are in line with international and

EU standards. Both sides will cooperate on adopting innovative digital solutions in migration management.

- Cooperate on the adoption of a **national migration management strategy** on the revision of the relevant legal framework and the effective implementation of its action plan.
- Strengthen operational cooperation to **significantly reduce the number of unfounded asylum applications** lodged by Armenian nationals in EU Member States.
- Continue taking appropriate measures to **address the root causes of irregular migration** from Armenia to EU Member States, including efforts to avoid the misuse of their visas or asylum applications by some Armenian citizens for medical treatment by strengthening the Armenian public health sector and raising the public's awareness of these developments.
- Continue strengthening the **asylum system**, fully in accordance with international standards and with the highest level of human rights protection, starting with *non-refoulement* and adequate reception standards.
- Strengthen cooperation and dialogue on various areas of migration in the context of the EU-Armenia **Mobility Partnership**.
- Further develop operational cooperation with the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)**, including through the negotiation and signing of a new working arrangement with Armenia's border management authorities. A new working arrangement could provide for greater operational cooperation, exchange of good practices and observers, training and information exchange including through the framework of EUROSUR.
- Develop and implement **Integrated Border Management (IBM)** at the national level, inter alia through strengthening capabilities, including border management-related risk analysis.

- Continue active participation in the **European Migration Network (EMN)** as an observer country and efficiently exchange information on migration and asylum between the EU Member States and Armenia in the network. Going forward, the EMN will continue to support the standardisation of migration data collection and collaborate with Armenia to further exchange and analyse statistical migration data.
- Report on improvements in the **analysis of migratory data** and the assessment of risks.

### Medium-term priorities

- Develop more effective ways of offering **circular and legal migration**, including labour migration schemes, while respecting existing national legislation and competences and fully respecting all migrant workers' human rights.
- Ensure the implementation of Armenia's comprehensive **migration and mass influx strategies**.
- Introduce the gradual roll-out of **biometric passports** in full compliance with highest ICAO standards and recommended practices, including at Armenian consulates abroad.

#### *2.2.4 Law enforcement*

### Short-term priorities

- Continue implementing the **police reform** agenda by strengthening police integrity, transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, including through Armenia's educational programme.

#### *2.2.5 Fight against Organised Crime*

### Short-term priorities

- Take full advantage and effectively implement the Working Arrangement with **Europol** in order to enhance the fight against organised crime.
- Enhance cooperation between the Armenian authorities including the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (**CEPOL**).

- Enhance Armenia's active participation in all **regional EU initiatives** aimed at reducing corruption and organised crime in the Eastern Partnership countries.
- Continue to take effective steps to further align Armenia's legal framework with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish **Trafficking in Persons**, Especially Women and Children, with the Protocol against the **Smuggling of Migrants** by Land, Sea and Air, and with EU and Council of Europe standards. Address the recommendations of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), in particular with regard to the prosecution of traffickers and the protection of and access to justice for victims.
- Monitor and report on the effectiveness of the **proactive identification and investigation** of cases of trafficking in human beings, focusing on segments of the population who are vulnerable or at risk of being trafficked.
- Continue to effectively prevent and counter **cybercrime** and adopt a dedicated strategy or action plan in this area including through intensified international cooperation with the EU and the Council of Europe.
- Step up implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the **Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse**.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Cooperate in the context of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (**EMPACT**).
- Step up efforts in the fight against cybercrime to build a comprehensive legal and institutional framework in line with the **Budapest Convention**.

#### *2.2.6 Tackling Illicit Drugs*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Implement balanced policies aimed at **tackling drugs trafficking**, including through intensified inter-agency and international cooperation.



- Continue drug prevention cooperation, by fully aligning Armenia's drug policies with EU positions, and continue implementing the **strategy on drugs** and the functioning of the competent institutional structures.
- Maintain **close cooperation** with the European Union Drugs Agency (**EUDA**), the former European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in order to exchange relevant and valid information.
- Continue **enhancing the capacity** of Armenian law enforcement agencies in the area of fighting drug trafficking, including to counter online drug trafficking networks.
- Continue enhancing **coordination and mutual legal assistance** in investigations of drug trafficking cases.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Continue ensuring a **balanced and integrated approach** to drugs issues in order to enable systems to cope with the health and social consequences of drug use, ensure more effective prevention of drug use and reduce the supply of, trafficking in and demand for illicit drugs.

#### *2.2.7. Anti-money laundering and countering terrorism financing*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Strengthen Armenia's capacity to effectively conduct **financial investigations**, including parallel financial investigations on organised crime cases on a systematic basis, and achieve concrete results leading to prosecutions, convictions and confiscations of criminal assets, including virtual assets, in a bid to fight organised crime networks and money laundering.
- Continue cooperating with the Council of Europe, MONEYVAL, and with relevant **authorities in EU Member States** on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing.

## Medium-term priorities

- Continue to further develop the **legal and institutional framework** for preventing and fighting money laundering and the financing of terrorism, including, where possible and relevant, through approximation to EU law in these areas.
- Continue enhancing operational cooperation on **confiscation, asset recovery and asset management** through effective communication and the exchange of best practices between the Armenian authorities and the EU Asset Recovery Offices.

### *2.3. Foreign and Security Policy*

**Political dialogue and cooperation** on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (**CFSP**), including on the Common Security and Defence Policy (**CSDP**), will be further enhanced. This cooperation will address regional security, security sector reform, crisis management issues, counterterrorism, cyber security and hybrid threats, including tackling foreign information manipulation and interference, while ensuring alignment with Women, Peace and Security commitments.

Cooperation will be based on **common values**, including the commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act. It will aim to increase policy coherence and effectiveness, making use of bilateral, multilateral and regional fora and upholding the international rules-based order, based on international law.

#### *2.3.1. Normalisation of relations in the region*

## Short-term priorities

- Continue **EU efforts** with the aim of achieving **sustainable, lasting and dignified peace** between Armenia and Azerbaijan, based on the principles of the mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders, in line with the 1991 Almaty Declaration.
- Support the full, immediate and effective implementation of all relevant **International Court of Justice orders**.

- Continue advocating for the release of Armenian **prisoners and other detainees**, and making efforts to address pending **humanitarian issues**, including the fate of missing persons and enforced disappearances, as **confidence-building measures**.
- Continue to support the full **normalisation of relations** between **Armenia and Türkiye** and encourage implementation of already reached agreements towards the full opening of the border between the two states, including through regular political dialogue and the involvement of relevant stakeholders.
- Support inclusive **regional transport connectivity** in the region under the countries' sovereignty and national jurisdiction, as well as according to the principles of equality and reciprocity, which also underpins Armenia's "**Crossroads of Peace**" project.
- Work towards ensuring gender mainstreaming and **women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation**, including of the conflict-affected women and civil society representatives, in conflict resolution and peace building, and in all reconciliation and recovery efforts.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Work towards setting up **confidence-building measures** between Armenia and Azerbaijan in support of sustainable and lasting peace and reconciliation of their societies.
- Contribute to delivering '**peace dividends**' through regional connectivity investment projects in Armenia, including along the ambitions of Armenia's new regional policy approach underpinning the Crossroads of Peace initiative, in alignment with the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

#### *2.3.2. International and regional cooperation and CSDP cooperation*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue deepening the **Political and Security Dialogue**, and advance regular **security and defence consultations**.

- Explore avenues for further strengthening **security and defence cooperation**, which may lead to a more structured cooperation.
- Ensure full operational capacity of the **EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA)**, with the objective of observing and reporting on the security situation along the border with Azerbaijan, contributing to human security in conflict-affected areas in Armenia, and to building confidence in support of peace and stability in the region. Work towards maintaining the EUMA presence for as long as necessary.
- Cooperate in support of **Armenia's Security Sector Reform**, to enhance its national security, stability and resilience. Work jointly to improve the security environment by improving the effectiveness and accountability of security institutions controlled by civilians and operating according to human rights and the rule of law. Aim for increased collaboration between the various actors and strengthen the role of civil society in oversight mechanisms.
- Aim to continue and expand supporting Armenia under the **European Peace Facility**, as a matter of priority. Continue cooperation with the aim of enhancing Armenia's resilience.
- Deepen cooperation in countering **hybrid threats**, including tackling **foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)**, consider capacity building and support to Armenia in the development of a comprehensive framework to effectively address hybrid threats, including examining the possibility of supporting the establishment and strengthening of institutions dedicated to national security and resilience against hybrid threats.
- Contribute to enhancing Armenia's **cyber resilience**. Consider capacity building, relevant technical assistance, exchange of information, best practices and expertise on respective policy frameworks as well as on practical cooperative efforts in multilateral fora, including the OSCE and the UN. Additionally, cooperate with Armenia to develop cybersecurity laws and regulations that align with key EU legislation.

- Strengthen practical cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management by facilitating Armenia's participation in EU-led civilian and military crisis management operations and missions, based on the **Framework Participation Agreement**.
- Strengthen cooperation in developing **strategic communication capacities**, including by consolidating the state's and society's resilience to disinformation, supporting the strengthening of media freedom and pluralism; expand and diversify practical cooperation frameworks to include civil society, state actors and institutions working in this area.
- Ensure the necessary sectoral expert exchanges and cooperation with the **European Security and Defence College** and other relevant EU institutions and bodies.
- Promote bilateral and regional cooperation on **broad security issues**, such as the management of **irregular migration, border management**, the protection and resilience of **critical infrastructure**, the fight against **organised crime**, including countering smuggling, trafficking in human beings and the illicit trafficking of goods (including drugs, firearms and chemical biological radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials). Encourage the training of appropriate staff, including in particular through the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence Initiative and its South-East and Eastern Europe Regional Secretariat and enhance participation of Armenian bodies on joint border management cooperation projects under the Interreg Black Sea Basin programme.
- Work towards increasing **Armenia's alignment** with the **EU CFSP declarations, decisions and action**, as well as enhancing the **cooperation and mutual support in multilateral fora**.

### Medium-term priorities

- Promote joint respect for the principles of **recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity** and the **inviolability of borders**, as established in the UN Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, including in Armenia's alignment with EU CFSP decisions and declarations and cooperation in multilateral fora, as appropriate.

### *2.3.3. Counterterrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and illegal arms exports*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Cooperate to **counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction** and their means of delivery by fully complying with, and implementing, the Parties' existing obligations under international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements, and other relevant international obligations.
- Make full use of the working arrangement between the competent authorities of **Armenia and Europol**, including by ensuring its full implementation, through the MoU on the establishment of a secure line (SIENA) and of the Liaison Agreement both signed in Yerevan in June 2023. This would allow maximising the exchange of information in many crime areas of common interest, notably on terrorism and serious crime, including on terrorist organisations, organised crime groups, their activities (including on cybercrime and financial and economic crime) and their support networks, as well as on drug trafficking.
- Make full use of the working arrangement between Armenia and **The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)**, while maximising opportunities to take part in the CEPOL's activities, including as part of regional capacity-building projects.
- Continue applying the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** standards, continue improving the effectiveness of its anti-money laundering, and counter terrorist financing system (AML/CTF system).

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Cooperate to deepen the international consensus on a human rights-based **fight against terrorism**, including on the legal definition of terrorist offences, including by promoting an agreement on a revised definition of terrorist offences in the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of terrorism.

- Continue to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396, and in particular to **share information on terrorist suspects** in order to identify, detect and prosecute foreign terrorist fighters.
- Cooperate on risk-based **border control** to ensure the safety and security of goods imported, exported or in transit.
- Tackle the illicit trade in **small arms and light weapons**, including their ammunition, under existing international agreements and UN Security Council resolutions, and in line with commitments under other international instruments applicable in this area.
- Continue to **cooperate in conventional arms export control**, in the light of the EU Common Position on the control of exports of military technology and equipment. Continue to cooperate with the EU in the fight against the trafficking of arms and the destruction of stockpiles.
- Continue contributing to the **implementation of arms control** and related confidence-building arrangements; all three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and other existing obligations under relevant international agreements and other international obligations.

#### ***2.4 Economic and Sectoral Cooperation***

The EU and Armenia will cooperate to strengthen **energy, digital, and transport connectivity, transition to climate-neutrality and energy security**, and to advance structural reforms, including on regulatory and safety aspects. The promotion of energy efficiency, the generation and use of renewable energy, the modernisation of the electricity grid, and the improvement of regional energy connectivity will further strengthen Armenia's energy security, while also reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. Consistently with their international commitments, notably under the Paris Agreement, they will work together towards achieving climate-neutrality, environmental and climate adaptation and resilience by promoting a modern, resource-efficient, decarbonised and circular economy. They will also cooperate to advance these goals in **relevant multilateral fora**. Cooperation on disaster prevention, preparedness and response will be further strengthened. The

joint work on identifying and speeding up the implementation of **strategic investment projects** under the Global Gateway will continue through the EU-Armenia Investment Coordination Platform.

#### *2.4.1. Transport connectivity*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- To improve air connectivity, apply administratively the **Common Aviation Area Agreement** signed in 2021 and ratified by Armenia in January 2023, as agreed in the Memorandum of Consultations signed in 2017.
- Continue providing support for Armenia's **aviation safety oversight** capacity through relevant support measures, including measures under bilateral and regional EU-funded programmes.
- Continue to improve the level of **regulatory harmonisation** with EU aviation legislation, including through cooperation with and technical assistance from the EU Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and EU Member State agencies.
- Continue to improve road safety through a multidisciplinary approach focusing on prevention and enforcement. Adopt and implement a **national road safety strategy** and a corresponding **action plan**, including in particular efforts to improve safety standards of road infrastructure. Participate actively in the activities of the Regional Eastern Partnership Road Safety Observatory (RSO) based in Tbilisi.

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Further improve **safety** across transport modes (air, road, rail).
- Further develop land transport infrastructure, in particular by implementing the jointly agreed priority projects included in the indicative trans-European transport network (TEN-T) investment action plan.
- Further support the inclusion of Armenia in wider **regional transport networks**, such as the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, in line with the EU strategic approach to the



Black Sea region, while also underscoring Armenia's potential as a bridge between different regions, as promoted by the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative.

- Explore **investment opportunities** in regional transport connectivity in Armenia, also called for by Armenia's new regional policy approach underpinning the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative.

#### 2.4.2 Energy

##### Short-term priorities

- Increase cooperation and efforts, including through the implementation of programmes on **energy efficiency, renewable energy, grid infrastructure, cross-border interconnections, and reducing supply dependencies** in the deployment of safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies. Consider opportunities for further cooperation on energy storage and geothermal energy.
- Continue supporting Armenia's inclusion in the **Black Sea electricity cable project**.
- Ensure the timely **implementation of all the remaining stress test recommendations** to ensure maximum safety while the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant (ANPP) is still in operation. Continue the regular exchange of information on the status of implementation of the national action plan to **improve nuclear safety** of ANPP until all actions have been completed.
- Develop, with continued EU support, a comprehensive strategy, roadmap and action plan for the **decommissioning of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant**, in accordance with Armenia's 2040 Energy Strategy. Concurrently, support Armenia's endeavours to ensure nuclear safety while steadily transitioning to new power generation capacity, aimed at enhancing the nation's energy security and independence and ensuring the conditions for sustainable development, while gradually approximating with Euratom legislation on nuclear safety, waste management and radiation protection, as undertaken in the CEPA, as well as adhering to other international documents, such as IAEA's nuclear safety standards and security guidance.

- Gradually advance the **approximation of Armenia's energy and nuclear safety legislation to the Union acquis** within the 2024 to 2029 timeframe in accordance with the CEPA and in line with Armenia's 2040 Energy Strategy.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Continue efforts to **diversify Armenia's energy sector**, including through renewable energy initiatives.
- Intensify cooperation between the **Energy Community** and Armenia.
- Continue supporting Armenia in strengthening its **nuclear safety culture** and the responsible and safe management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.
- Explore further **investment opportunities** in the energy sector for security and diversification of supply and overall energy security in the region.

#### *2.4.3 Digital connectivity*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue **harmonising digital markets** between the EU and Armenia and with the Eastern Partnership region. Support the implementation of the **2021-2025 strategy for the digitalisation of Armenia** covering e-governance, the digital economy and digital society, and cooperate on the development of a new strategy roadmap for 2026-2030.
- Further strengthen the **digitalisation of transport connectivity**, including e-logistics, digitalisation of transport documents, and consider other digital connectivity initiatives.
- Work towards strengthening EU-Armenia **digital connectivity** including through considering Armenia's participation in Black Sea Digital connectivity projects, in line with the "Growth & Prosperity" pillar of the EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea region.
- Look into the possibility of Armenia's participation in the **Digital Europe Programme**.

- Cooperate to develop the **cybersecurity strategy** and to build the capacity to implement it, including solutions to protect information systems, and the timely detection and elimination of threats.
- Explore the possibility of the establishment of the EU-Armenia EU Cyber Dialogue.
- Deepen cooperation at technical and regulatory levels on **data inter-operability, data exchange and digital identity** as key enablers to improve cross-border digital services with the EU.
- Work closely to extend the benefits of the **Digital Single Market** to Armenia. This includes implementing electronic identification and electronic trust services in line with the EU Digital Identity framework and progress towards a mutual recognition agreement on trust services.
- **Strive to align** Armenia's digital economy with EU standards.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Support the revision and improvement of Armenia's **Law on Electronic Communication**, in line with the EU acquis in this area.
- Step up joint efforts on the implementation of flagship projects under the **Global Gateway Strategy** to foster the digital transition.

#### *2.4.4 High-Tech Industry*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Gradually **advance collaboration** in high-tech industry.
- Take steps to start cooperation with the EU in the framework of the **Union Space Programme**, its components and services to engage Armenian scientific potential in addressing global challenges.
- Leverage and promote existing initiatives at EU level in **support of innovation and entrepreneurship** to which Armenia is eligible (e.g. EIC Programmes, CASSINI Hackathons).
- Explore ways to encourage cooperation on **satellite connectivity** on a commercial basis.

## Mid-term priorities

- Exchange on the **harmonisation of high-tech industry standards** in Armenia and improve Armenia's compliance with the international best practices.
- Exchange on the efforts of Armenia in developing **AI and UAV technology regulations**.

### *2.4.5 Environment*

## Short-term priorities

- Improve environmental governance by implementing key legislation on **environmental impact assessments**.
- Continue enhancing the relevant **legal framework** with regards to **waste management** and allocate necessary resources for the development of comprehensive legislation on **chemicals**.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive **waste management system** at the national and local levels, in line with the European standards including on circular economy and by introducing new facilities in line with the waste hierarchy.
- Continue implementing key **water, air quality and industrial emissions legislation**.
- Cooperate to achieve the Global Targets of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** including in preparation and implementation of effective NBSAP and national biodiversity targets ahead of COP17.
- Continue working through the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (i.e. a **Global Agreement on Plastics**).
- Strengthen the environmental governance of specially **nature-protected areas**. Build the capacity of the environmental protection service to end illegal logging activities in forests and in specially nature-protected areas.
- Improve sustainable forest management by implementing the **Forest Code**.

### Medium-term priorities

- Fully exploit the potential of a **climate-neutral and circular economy** and develop comprehensive **growth policies** in all relevant sectors, e.g. by incorporating circular economy principles into the national waste management system.
- Continue ensuring the right to a clean and healthy environment, improve the mechanisms for public access to **environmental information and public participation** in decision-making processes on environmental matters, by further involving all interested stakeholders and by cooperating with civil society.

#### *2.4.6 Climate Action*

### Short-term priorities

- Implement the **updated Nationally Determined Contribution 2021-2030** of Armenia to the Paris Agreement. Adopt a new, ambitious **post-2030 Nationally Determined Contribution** ahead of UNFCCC COP30.
- Implement and update the **National Adaption Plan**.
- As a preliminary **step towards carbon pricing** in Armenia, develop necessary legislation on monitoring, reporting and verifying greenhouse gas emissions at installation level as well as sub-installation level, as applicable, and ensure sufficient administrative capacity to implement it.
- Ensure the timely adoption and swift implementation of **Armenia's Climate Law**.
- Use open EU Copernicus **climate Earth Observation** data and climate models, enhance Armenia's weather and climate forecasting and climate policies while contributing with own current and historical meteorological data.

### Medium-term priorities

- Building on current and future efforts, take domestic action to implement and achieve the new post-2030 Nationally Determined Contribution and to implement the **long-term low-emission development strategy to 2050** under the Paris Agreement, setting concrete policies and measures across all sectors, and **strive to achieve climate-**

**neutrality** by 2050. Mainstream climate action in sectoral policies and measures and strengthen the capacity of different authorities to implement climate action across sectors.

- Keep expanding the **Covenant of Mayors** in Armenia and empower local authorities in order to stimulate climate action at local level.
- Based on a solid monitoring, reporting and verification framework, consider options for **carbon pricing**.
- Take domestic action to implement the **Global Methane Pledge** and contribute to reducing global methane emissions by at least 30% from 2020 levels by 2030.
- Implement the **comprehensive national adaptation plan** of Armenia and the sectoral adaptation strategies, by building necessary capacities, technology transfer, to strengthen climate change resilience of the economy and local communities and reduce the risk of climate-induced disasters.
- Continue taking steps to ensure compliance with Armenia's obligations under the **Montreal Protocol** including to its Kigali amendment. These efforts should be accelerated in view of ensuring alignment with the EU's F-gas and Ozone-Depleting Substances Regulations. Take steps towards the implementation of the **Global Cooling pledge**.
- Promote the transition towards zero-emission transport and implement **electric mobility projects** in Armenia.

#### *2.4.7 Public Health*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Enhance the quality and accessibility of **primary healthcare** to prevent disease and improve quality of life, focusing on persons in a situation of vulnerability.
- Do maximum efforts for Armenia to accede to the **Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products**.
- Continue to implement the **2023-2026 Healthcare Development Programme**, including the roll-out of the Quality of Care activities and universal health insurance scheme and collaborate on the establishment of the Universal Health Insurance Fund.

## Medium-term priorities

- Ensure active participation in the **EU Health Security initiative** in partnership with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).
- Adapt and implement the **mid/long-term health strategy for post Covid-19 realities**, including by strengthening Armenia's capacity in epidemiological analysis/research on disease outbreaks, data modelling and statistics, in line with the One Health approach.
- Strengthen tobacco control policies and legislation, as well as their rigorous enforcement, in line with Armenia's commitment to transposing and implementing EU acquis under the **CEPA**, and with Armenia's obligations under the **Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**.
- Finalise Armenia's application on **Pharmaceutical Inspection Cooperation (PIC)** membership.

### *2.4.8 Civil Protection*

## Short-term priorities

- Continue enhancing **inter-agency and inter-ministerial coordination** when requesting and receiving international assistance (notably, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism).
- Adopt the **Law on Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection**.
- Continue efforts to establish a **Single Emergency Call/Management Centre** as part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to improve the efficiency and coordination of the emergency/incident response process.
- Further reform the **Rescue Services**, including refining the legislative framework for civil protection and disaster risk management policy (e.g. disaster insurance system and volunteerism).
- Continue the **good cooperation** between the EU and Armenia on civil protection, namely under the initiatives for the **prevention, preparedness and response** to natural and human-induced disasters.

### Medium-term priorities

- Identify which **EU Civil Protection Mechanism tools** Armenia could benefit from, with the aim to further develop the resilience to disasters.
- Continue implementing Armenia's Strategy and Action Plan on **Disaster Risk Management**.

#### *2.4.9 Economic Development and Market Opportunities*

### Short-term priorities

- Do a peer review of the Armenian national **statistical system** in 2025.
- Continue prudent policymaking to anchor **macroeconomic stability**, notably ensuring a sound fiscal position and a stable financial sector.
- Continue supporting **sustainable and inclusive economic growth**.
- Continue improving **public finance management**.
- Continue maintaining good governance, including safeguarding the independence of the **central bank**.
- Continue boosting **SMEs' access to finance**, including through investments under the Global Gateway Strategy, to improve Armenia's competitiveness and labour productivity.

### Medium-term priorities

- Look into Armenia's participation in EU funding instruments aimed at **boosting entrepreneurship and the competitiveness of businesses**, in particular SMEs.
- Take steps to develop a taxonomy for sustainable finance and capacities of financial institutions for financial ecosystems in line with climate neutrality and environmental objectives.
- Further improve the **business environment**, including by tackling the informal sector.



- Promote **entrepreneurship**, with a particular **focus on women and youth**, to foster i) the development of business strategies, ii) the creation and development of start-ups in the regions of Armenia; and iii) the acceleration and incubation programmes.
- Further strengthen the production and dissemination of reliable **statistics**, including for evidence-based decision-making.
- Adopt the national **employment strategy**.
- Increase the transparency of the activities and financial flows of **state-owned companies**.

#### *2.4.10 Agriculture and Rural Development*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Address the remaining obstacles to transitioning effectively to **green and sustainable agriculture**, including by getting all relevant sector stakeholders involved in the process.
- Ensure the adoption of **Armenia's territorial development strategy**, focusing on equitable development.
- Continue cooperation under the Local Empowerment of Actors for Development (LEAD) Programme to pilot the EU LEADER (Links between the rural economy and development actions) **rural development** in Armenia to establish mechanisms for the sustainable funding of Local Action Groups (LAGs).

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Advance the **decentralisation** agenda, including fiscal decentralisation, and build the capacity of local authorities to ensure the provision of all public services in rural areas, particularly the most remote rural places.
- Promote and facilitate **climate-smart agriculture** in line with environmental protection guidelines, energy-efficient technologies and other good agricultural practices; modernise and improve the production, processing and storage of agricultural products; develop agriculture that is both productive and sustainable; and

promote the introduction of resource-saving cultivation technologies, long-term effective pasture management to increase the productivity, added value and competitiveness of Armenian agriculture.

- Expand cooperation in the field of **food security** including on upgrading the relevant legislation.

#### *2.4.11 Cohesion policy*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Continue participation and foster cooperation within the scope of the **Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin programme** including support to Armenian partners and stakeholders, to enable and facilitate the implementation of cooperation projects on the blue economy, climate resilience and environmental protection and people-to-people actions.
- Strengthen the **capacity of the national bodies engaged** in the coordination and implementation of the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme at programme level, and of the Armenian beneficiaries at project level, to ensure the application of the EU legal framework for the programme. This should include enhancing the capacity of national controllers for the proper functioning of the programme's management and control system.
- Enhance **public sector cooperation** in the Black Sea Basin Area, through joint initiatives and projects, building trust and confidence across the Black Sea.

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Advance the **decentralisation agenda** and build the capacity of local authorities to participate in the preparation and implementation of territorial cooperation programmes, the design, monitoring, reporting, evaluating of programmes and the sound financial management of EU funds.

#### *2.4.12 Strategic communication*

### Short-term priorities

- Continue to cooperate on the implementation of the reforms, including the “**Strategic Communication Architecture**” reform.
- Advance cooperation to enhance **visibility** of EU-Armenia cooperation, promote **shared values** and explain the **positive impact** of strengthened EU-Armenia partnership across different sectors.
- Strengthen cooperation on strategic communication and to tackle foreign information manipulation and interference (**FIMI**), to increase public trust in institutions and decision-makers and strengthen social cohesion.
- Work for an **enabling information space**, including by supporting independent media, implementing media literacy programmes as well as enhancing the professional development of journalists.

#### *2.4.13 Mining and Critical minerals*

### Short-term priorities

- Strengthen cooperation with the **European Geological Service** (EuroGeoSurveys).
- Consider EuroGeoSurveys membership.

### Medium-term priorities

- Join forces towards the **digitization** of existing geological information of Armenia (EuroGeoSurveys),
- **Publish digitized information** online, in line with European standards.
- Explore the use of **remote sensing means** of the Geological Service in order to supplement the existing information and assess its reliability.
- Cooperate in the field of **geological research and mineral resources exploration**, with a focus on critical raw materials in Armenia, and with the possibility of implementation and application of modern methods and tools.

- Contribute to **harmonize** the current natural resource reporting and management system of Armenia with the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC).
- Within the framework of the global policy of gradual transition to **renewable energy**, cooperate in the field of discovery of new deposits of critical minerals, and exploitation of existing ones.

#### *2.4.14 Tourism*

##### **Short-Term Priorities:**

- Facilitate best practice exchange and sharing of experience in **developing responsible and inclusive tourism**, including approaches to accessible tourism services and digital tools.
- Strengthen cooperation to support the **identification and promotion** of diverse tourism destinations, products and services.
- **Enhance collaboration** among tourism stakeholders, including the private sector, to foster innovation and competitiveness in areas of mutual interest.

##### **Medium-Term Priorities:**

- Support the development and implementation of **sustainable tourism policies and strategies**, aligning with the Transition Pathway for Tourism to build a more resilient and digital tourism ecosystem, with attention to accessibility and environmentally sustainable practices and the protection of cultural heritage.
- Identify and **address barriers to travel services**, improving market access and boosting tourism flows between both regions, including through knowledge exchange and capacity building.

#### *2.5 Trade and Trade-Related Matters*

The EU and Armenia agree that the effective implementation of CEPA regulatory alignment would **strengthen trade** between them and help further **diversify Armenia's exports and imports**.

They will also strengthen the implementation of their commitments relating to transparency in trade-related policymaking, exchange information and provide relevant training.

#### *2.5.1. Trade in Goods and Customs*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Work together to significantly increase and facilitate the **diversification of Armenia's export structure**, including the export of new products to the EU market.
- Continue to cooperate closely to **avoid the circumvention of EU sanctions**, including through expertise and information sharing.
- Continue **exchanging trade statistics**.
- Follow up on Armenia's request to become an observer in the **Common Transit Convention**, and continue to update each other on dual use goods statistics and on all developments in **customs legislation**.
- Identify and assess the economic value of **potential tariff reductions** for specific Armenian exports. Work together on the reduction of **non-tariff trade barriers** like sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical barriers to trade (TBTs).

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Continue **modernising Armenian customs** authorities and modernise and simplify customs procedures, while ensuring that effective antifraud measures are in place.

#### *2.5.2. Technical Regulations, Standardisation and Related Infrastructure*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Develop infrastructure for the administration of **standards and technical regulations**, including with EU guidance.
- Improve cooperation between the **Armenian accreditation body** and European accreditation bodies, including training or capacity-building, where applicable.

- Strengthen cooperation between the Armenian **metrology** body and the European metrology bodies.

### Medium-term priorities

- Identify potential areas of additional support for **alignment** with EU standards/technical regulations.

#### *2.5.3. Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures*

### Short-term priorities

- Take steps to further strengthen the **food safety control infrastructure, system and equipment**, including through digitalisation and considering training to specialists involved in food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary controls.
- Increase cooperation to facilitate Armenian **fish exports** to the EU and take joint steps to follow up on Armenia's request to add new species to the list of fishery products authorised for export to the EU.
- Cooperate on developing **early warning systems** in Armenia for food and feed, animal health and plant health safety.
- Advance **pesticide** waste management and traceability.
- Exchange on the legislative requirements for science-based **risk assessments** and their implementation.
- Advance the approximation of Armenia's food safety legislation with the aim of promoting **trade diversification of agrifood products**.

### Medium-term priorities

- Make progress on the **authorisation of additional food products** to the EU market.
- Organise **information campaigns** with relevant agencies, businesses and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) on the requirements for accessing the EU

market, as well as with civil society on the relevant consumer protection aspects of food and food safety.

- **Help** Armenian businesses to **better adapt** so they can access the EU market, focusing on micro, small and medium-sized food business operators.
- Collaborate in **animal welfare** and the reduced use of antibiotics in animal production to combat antibiotics resistance.
- Establish additional **EU-Armenia certificates** in order to make Armenian import requirements more transparent.

#### *2.5.4. Trade in Services and Electronic Commerce*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Exchange information regularly on the regulatory approximation of legislation on **postal services**, in line with CEPA commitments.
- Exchange information on the **Services Domestic Regulation**, as agreed in the relevant WTO Joint Statement Initiative that led to Armenia's joining the initiative.

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Cooperate to **expand Armenia's trade in services** particularly in sectors such as information technology, finance and professional services, by improving the regulatory environment and strengthening alignment with EU standards and legislation.
- Exchange information and experience on regulatory issues pertaining to the **digital economy**.

#### *2.5.5. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)*

##### **Short-term priorities**

- Advance the development of **geographical indications infrastructure** and the corresponding quality control mechanisms to ensure the proper quality of **Armenian brandy**. Promote marketing in new markets to ensure the diversification of exports of Armenian brandy.

- Ensure that both EU and Armenian rights holders have a high level of **IPR** protection and enforcement. Improve IPR enforcement, gather information on IP infringements and share it with Armenia.
- Take effective measures against **counterfeiting and piracy**, including the production of statistical information on them, to be shared between the EU and Armenia.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Increase public awareness on **intellectual property protection** and use and ensure effective dialogue between the rights holders and users.

#### *2.5.6. Trade and Sustainable Development*

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Review and adopt the **Trade and Sustainable Development** (TSD) roadmap, including specific implementation priorities and pursue its implementation.

#### **Medium-term priorities**

- Continue pursuing the effective implementation of **Multilateral Environmental Agreements** (MEAs) and **Climate Conventions** in law and in practice.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) implementation, in particular for species traded with the EU in high numbers.
- Further strengthen the provision and oversight of **labour rights** in line with ILO fundamental conventions, including through further enhancing the labour inspectorate and tripartite consultations.
- Continue the **dialogue** on implementing the commitments related to trade and sustainable development, including on stakeholder involvement.

#### *2.5.7. Public Procurement*

#### **Medium-term priorities**



- Further implement the public procurement **roadmap**.
- Share statistics on the functioning of the revised public procurement **review system** in Armenia.
- Provide precise and timely information on **planned legislative work** affecting procurement policy and its implementation, both on legislative developments and the setting up of public procurement institutions.
- Revise, adopt and implement the **new Public Procurement Law**, including e-procurement and improvements in the blacklisting procedure.
- Introduce measures to make procurement **more competitive** and reduce single-source procedures.

## ***2.6. People-to-People Contact***

The parties will further cooperate to **maximise the benefits** to Armenia of its participation in people-to-people contacts, including as an associated country in the Horizon Europe programme. The parties will continue their active cooperation in Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe as well as regional initiatives such as EU4Youth, Creative Europe, Young European Ambassadors, EU4Culture and other volunteering, cooperation and exchange programmes under the Eastern Partnership umbrella. The EU and Armenia underline the important role of **youth** and youth organisations in shaping a vibrant and inclusive civil society. The parties will also strengthen cultural relations. Further cooperation on vocational education and training (VET) will be encouraged, in particular in the context of Erasmus+, and on apprenticeships and work-based learning under the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, which Armenia joined in October 2023.

### ***2.6.1. Research, Technological Development and Innovation***

#### **Short-term priorities**

- Cooperate on the development and implementation of research and innovation policy reforms, including revising the regulatory framework for research and innovation and developing a **research infrastructure roadmap** for Armenia.
- Adopt a **national strategy on research and innovation**. Ensure the adoption and implementation of the **Law** on Higher Education and Research.
- Continue active cooperation under the **Horizon Europe** Association Agreement, and enhance Armenia's participation, notably greater involvement of industry and the private sector.
- Continue Armenia's active participation in and integration into the **European Research Area (ERA)**.
- Ensure effective implementation of the recommendations of the **2020 Policy Support Facility** and the related action plan.
- Increase participation in **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** to enable Armenian researchers to develop their skills that match the needs of the labour market, to innovate and help strengthen R&I capacity of the country and to facilitate international strategic partnerships for researchers' training and exchanges between Armenian and EU institutions.
- Further strengthen Armenia's participation in the **European Innovation Council (EIC)** funding instruments to strengthen its start-up ecosystem, while contributing to sustained economic development, promoting women's entrepreneurship, effecting the green and digital transition and scaling up game-changing innovation priorities.

### **Medium-term priorities**

- Collaborate on the implementation of the **Academic City project** as a complex of clusters for providing sound environment for quality higher education and research for boosting the innovative ecosystem for long-term sustainable development.
- Boost human, material and institutional resources in order to improve **research and innovation capacities**.

**Short-term priorities**

- Fully implement Armenia's **State Programme for the Development of Education until 2030** and its accompanying action plan, including in the areas of youth policy, primary, secondary and higher education, as well as VET and life-long learning.
- Do a nationwide roll-out of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) pilot results.
- Following a comprehensive consultation with young people, adopt and fully implement the **Law on Youth**, applying the best international experience and standards.
- Promote Armenia's active participation in the international dimension of **Erasmus+** to increase student and staff mobility, enhance the capacities of higher education institutions and modernise the higher **education** system, as well as to support the capacities of the Vocational Education and Training institutes. Enhance Armenia's participation in the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**.
- Continue to strengthen cooperation with the **European Training Foundation**.
- Promote Armenia's active participation in **Erasmus+ to enhance youth mobility**, to support international cooperation in the fields of youth and sport, and to reinforce the capacities of Armenian organisations active in these areas.
- Promote Armenia's participation in the **European Solidarity Corps** as well as other volunteering, cooperation and exchange programmes on education, training and youth.
- Promote Armenia's active participation in **Eastern Partnership regional programmes and initiatives** such as EU4Youth and the Young European Ambassadors.
- Continue the ongoing **dialogue** between education stakeholders including development partners through the regular EU-Armenia Strategic Policy Dialogue on Education Reform.

## Medium-term priorities

- After adopting the Law on Youth, adopt and implement a coordinated **national level strategic plan** on youth issues as a cross-sectoral priority.
- Ensure the right to **quality education** for all, including people from disadvantaged backgrounds, taking further steps to promote inclusive education and training, in line with the education strategy.
- Ensure more structured involvement of **young people in work**, including in the form of employment partnerships centred around digital skills for disadvantaged young people and youth entrepreneurship for the climate-neutral economy.
- Introduce **qualification programmes** and the relevant syllabus in VET including entrepreneurship, and monitor the introduction of modules for key entrepreneurship skills.
- **Match VET professions and skills** provided by VET institutions with labour market demand by aligning them with the priority sectors of economy and regional development programmes, and by strengthening work-based learning.
- Further improve the **quality of education**, equal **access** to it and its **sustainability** (including efficient funding for all levels of education), and stimulate **non-formal education and lifelong learning**.

### 2.6.3 *Cooperation in Culture and Sports*

- Cooperate on the development and implementation of **inclusive cultural policies**, including in terms of its regional and ethnic diversity and traditions, and its cultural and creative industries, to support socio-economic development, inclusion and citizen participation; including as part of ongoing bilateral and EU-funded regional programmes.
- Ensure active participation and cooperation in culture with support from **EU programmes**.

- Enhance the participation of Armenian cultural operators in cultural cooperation programmes, in particular **Creative Europe**. Work on aligning the **media legislation** with EU Directive 2010/13 on audiovisual media services in order to be able to participate in the media strand and cross sectoral strands of the programme.
- Continue cooperation aimed at **empowering creative professionals and organisations** with education, entrepreneurial skills and visibility, to ensure a sustainable and thriving cultural industry in Armenia.
- Cooperate on the development of **sports policy** in Armenia by exchanging best practices and promoting sport as an essential element of a healthy lifestyle.
- Encourage Armenia's participation in **Erasmus sports** actions and other initiatives such as the European Week of Sport.
- Align Armenia's legislation with **best practices on ethics in sport**.

#### 2.6.4 *Audiovisual and Media Cooperation*

##### **Medium-term priorities**

- Strengthen the **media's independence** and the **safety of journalists** in compliance with relevant European standards, by exchanging views on media freedom, audiovisual policy and the relevant international standards including cooperation in the fight against incitement to hatred and violence.
- Exchange **best practices** regarding media freedom, media pluralism, including with regard to the decriminalisation of defamation, the protection of journalist sources and cultural diversity aspects of media through regular dialogue.
- Make media ownership more **transparent**.
- Strengthen the capacity and independence of **regulatory authorities/media bodies**.

## Conclusion

The EU-Armenia Partnership Agenda is a **significant step forward** in the relationship between the two parties. It builds upon the **foundation of the CEPA**, setting **ambitious priorities** across a wide range of sectors. The Agenda is an expression of **shared values and mutual interests**, and a testament to the EU's and Armenia's commitment to **deepen cooperation in all areas**.

A core element of this Agenda is its emphasis on **good governance, human rights, and the rule of law**. It aims to fortify Armenia's institutions and create a more just and equitable society in line with the highest European standards. This focus is essential for laying the groundwork for sustainable development and progress.

**Economic cooperation, trade diversification and connectivity** are also key pillars of the Agenda. By working together, the EU and Armenia can unlock new opportunities for economic growth, create jobs, raise the level of prosperity and improve lives. In this context, Armenia's "Crossroads of Peace" initiative further underscores Armenia's potential as a bridge between different regions, promoting inclusive regional connectivity and cooperation according to the goals of the EU's Global Gateway strategy. This is also in line with the "Growth & Prosperity" pillar of the EU strategic approach to the Black Sea region.

The Partnership Agenda addresses critical **socio-economic challenges**, specifically the social inclusion of women and girls and persons in vulnerable situations, such as Armenians displaced following Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

By **strengthening trade relations, modernising and approximating trade-related policies**, the EU and Armenia are working to diversify the country's economy, attract investments, improve the standards of Armenian products, enhance export capacities, and create new market opportunities. The focus on regulatory alignment, particularly in customs modernisation, technical standards, and food safety regulations, highlights the EU's role in supporting Armenia's access to the European market.

The Partnership Agenda also prioritises enhanced cooperation on **foreign, security and defence policy**, including regional security, crisis management, security sector reform, cybersecurity and

countering hybrid threats, reflecting a shared commitment to resilience, stability and peace. Cooperation is based on common values, including the commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act.

The Partnership Agenda acknowledges the importance of **mobility and people-to-people contacts, promoting education, research and innovation exchanges**. These exchanges will facilitate greater mobility, foster a deeper understanding and create lasting bonds between the citizens of Armenia and the EU.

**The EU is committed to providing support, expertise and best practices** to Armenia to achieve these priorities, as well as working with like-minded partners in mobilising available international instruments, in cooperation with Member States and International Financial Institutions. The success of this Partnership Agenda is a shared endeavour. It will require ongoing **dialogue, effective coordination, and a willingness to adapt** to new challenges and opportunities.

The Partnership Agenda is also a reflection of the **European aspirations of the Armenian people** and the **EU's commitment to supporting Armenia's** democratic development, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and socio-economic resilience. The EU commends Armenia's commitment to European values and its desire to deepen its integration with the European family.

The EU-Armenia partnership is at a pivotal moment. The Partnership Agenda lays out our shared vision of the future, one that reflects a shared commitment to fostering stability, prosperity, and peace in the region and holds the promise of tangible benefits. By working together, the EU and Armenia can achieve the ambitious goals set out in this Agenda, creating a **more prosperous and secure future for all**.