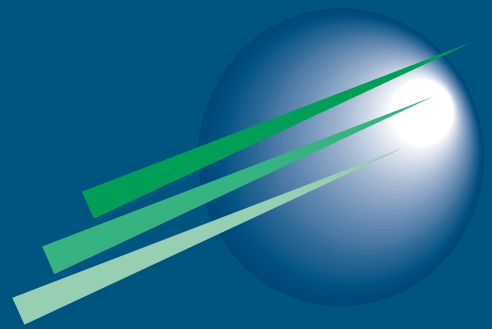


ACNIS NEWSLETTER

January - June 2012

The Armenian Center for National and International Studies



ACNIS NEWSLETTER

In 2010, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) launched the publication of a regular series of newsletters. This is the next issue of our new *ACNIS Newsletter*, a publication that provides a brief summary of our work, activities and projects for the period from January to June 2012.

SPRING SEMESTER AT ACNIS YOUTH SCHOOL REACHES THE FINISH LINE

From March 23 to June 15 2012, ACNIS, within the framework of its youth school program, carried out a series of seminar-courses entitled “Establishment of Civil Society and Formation of Constitutional State in Armenia: Key Issues and New Challenges.” The seminars were intended for entry-level political scientists and analysts endowed with an analytical frame of mind and expert-level reasoning skills.



The program, composed of thirteen free seminars, scrutinized issues with relevance to peculiarities

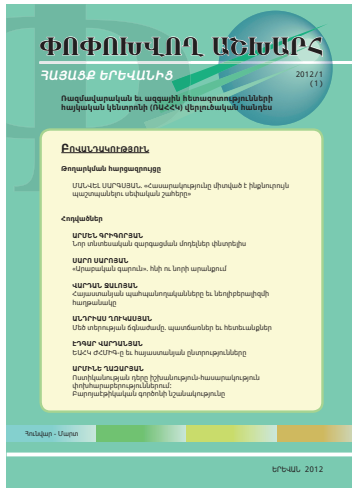


of transitional societies; Armenia's and Artsakh's paths of democratization; and legal and political aspects of citizen-society-state triangle. On March 23, ACNIS founder Raffi K. Hovannisian welcomed the seminar-course program participants, and wished them well in their future endeavors.

The speakers included ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian, senior analyst Hovsep Khurshudian, analysts Saro Saroyan, Edgar Vardanian, and Armine Ghazarian; Arpine Galfayan, head of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR) NGO; Stepan Danielyan, chairman of Collaboration for Democracy Center; law expert Andrias Ghoukasyan, and ethnographer Aghasi Tadevosyan.

At the end of this program, nine participants received certificates.

ACNIS UNVEILS INAUGURAL ISSUE OF NEW PUBLIC POLICY JOURNAL: “THE CHANGING WORLD: VIEWPOINTS FROM YEREVAN”



On May 16, the Center released the inaugural issue of the new ACNIS quarterly public policy publication, entitled “*The Changing World: Viewpoints from Yerevan*,” during a special presentation-seminar held at the Center’s office.

The meeting brought together the quarterly’s contributors, other leading analysts, policy specialists, and members of the press.



The ceremony featured brief presentations from the volume authors Armen Grigoryan, Saro Saroyan, Vardan Jaloyan, Armine Ghazarian, Edgar Vardanian, and Andrias Ghoukasyan, who stated key principles guiding their works. The addresses were followed by a series of questions and answers, and featured a lively exchange with the audience.

The edition starts with an interview of Manvel Sargsian on the journal’s mission, and domestic and foreign imperatives on the Armenian political agenda, which are included on the waiting list for unbiased research.

The purpose of this new publication is to reflect on a comprehensive set of issues, challenges and perspectives pertinent to Armenia’s today and tomorrow in the context of regional and international developments by seeking innovative concepts, recommendations, and alternative approaches, from which could be derived the most optimal policy options for resolving various intricate issues facing Armenia.

Manvel Sargsian served as the editor-in-chief of the issue, and Gevorg Lalayan as the editor. Design and formatting activities were carried out by Ashot Turajyan. The editorial board included Karapet Kalenchian, Saro Saroyan, Edgar Vardanian and Ruzan Pluzyan.



ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian welcomed the audience with opening remarks and conveyed hope that the volume will offer a thorough and impartial overview of the pivotal advancements in the world, and their Armenian perceptions. “Today huge importance is attached to the development of new cognitive mechanisms—which will contribute to the comprehensive understanding of the social and political trends pertinent to the region and the world alike, and, in



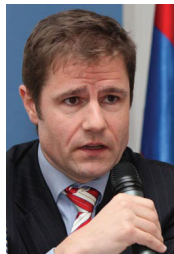
FOREIGN DIPLOMATS' COLLABORATION WITH ACNIS

The Center's work schedule for the period from January to June was fairly eventful in terms of meetings, and exchanging views on a variety of issues, with high level representatives from the diplomatic community in Yerevan.



On March 9, ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian met with Canan Atilgan, Director of "South Caucasus: Political Dialogue" regional program of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, to present ACNIS projects for 2012.

On March 21, Sargsian had a meeting with Carel Hofstra, Deputy Head of the OSCE office in Yerevan, to introduce ACNIS projects to be carried out in 2012.



On April 12, the Center's director of research received the Ukrainian Embassy's Deputy Head of Mission Igor S. Roman and conversed with him on regional developments as well as matters of domestic political concern.

On April 17, Sargsian attended an Iranian Embassy reception marking the Armed Forces Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On May 17, Manvel Sargsian met with Program Development Officer Tyce Shideler of the USAID Armenia. Upon the guest's request, Sargsian offered his vision in regard to the best ways for reworking the USAID's strategic development plan for Armenia, which would be valid for the next five years.



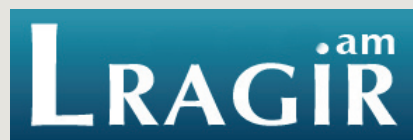
On May 21, ACNIS director of research Manvel Sargsian hosted and conferred with British Ambassador Jonathan Aves. During this meeting they talked about the prospects of cooperation, and a wide range of regional issues.

On May 31, ACNIS director of administration Karapet Kalenchian, and coordinator of research programs Ruzan Pluzyan had a meeting with the German Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission Christoph Breunig to discuss potential avenues for collaboration.

MEDIA OUTREACH



Center director of administration Karapet Kalenchian's article, "How Many Times Can We Fall into the Same Trap," was published by several electronic media outlets. In his analysis, Kalenchian reflected on the armed incidents along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border during US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to the region. The author underscored that settlement of the Karabakh issue had reached a deadlock, and suggested the Armenian government take asymmetric steps to neutralize the Azerbaijani aggression.



On May 1, ACNIS analyst Edgar Vardanian gave an interview to

Lragir.am news agency and spoke about the election process, public perceptions about it, and issues concerning the necessity for the formation of a civic/political movement. He stated that there is a lack of confidence in the



integrity of the process among the general public. "Large segments of the society see that no measures were taken to avert the mechanisms hindering freedom of expression and the holding of fair elections, and consider it meaningless to participate in it. Or they do not want to any purpose to spoil their relations with various representatives of the 'establishment' with whom they communicate at different levels, and, as a consequence, vote for the incumbent authorities in despair and under duress, at the threat of being extorted out of financial resources." In Vardanian's view, if the society is interested in the systemic changes, it should develop a democratic movement, which will be able to shift the atmosphere and lay foundations for fair elections.



On May 23, Center analyst Saro Saroyan responded to the questions of *Gala* television where he looked at the May 6 parliamentary polls and the post-election situation in Armenia. According to him, the parliamentary contest did not mark a qualitative change, and proved one more time that the mechanisms of election fraud were perfected. "How can we talk about competition in the National Assembly, if only one political force enjoys absolute majority, which can solely form the government and secure the passage of any government proposed bill," maintained Saroyan.



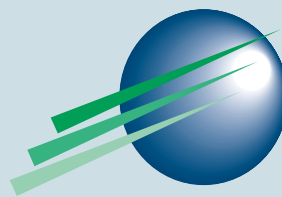
And on the same day, ACNIS analyst, and physiologist Armine Ghazarian was interviewed by *Lragir.am* news agency. In her talk she similarly reflected on the post-election developments in Armenia. "The stormy election campaign supposed prolonged and stormy discussions afterwards. But something happened or had already happened, leaving a vacuum in the post-election period," noted



ed the analyst. As per Ghazarian, the cause behind this was the strategy adopted by the authorities. "They made an imitation

of elections, and imposed a sense of 'obligation' upon each corrupted voter—but in reality did as always, according to the Armenian traditions of elections—though in a more 'civilized' and developed way. The result of this strategy was dazzling. The corrupted society sold its votes to authorities, and in doing so, sold those votes for silence."

MORE ABOUT US



The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) is a leading independent strategic research center located in Yerevan, Armenia. As an independent, objective institution committed to conducting professional policy research and analysis, ACNIS strives to raise the level of public debate and seeks to broaden public engagement in the public policy process, as well as fostering greater and more inclusive public knowledge. Founded in 1994, ACNIS is the institutional initiative of Raffi K. Hovannisian, Armenia's first Minister of Foreign Affairs. Over the past eighteen years, ACNIS has acquired a prominent reputation as a primary source of professional independent research and analysis covering a wide range of policy issues.

For more information on ACNIS, our work and activities, please contact us at: **root@acnis.am** or visit our website at: **www.acnis.am**.