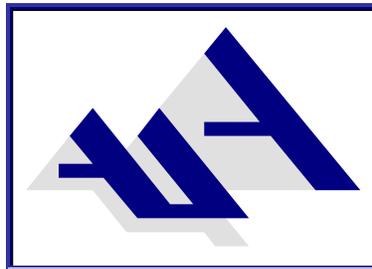


**The 12th NISPAcee Annual Conference “Central and Eastern European Countries inside  
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**Ethnic minorities in public administration  
in the Republic of Armenia: distant utopia or a tangible future?**



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## **Abstract**

This paper deals with some of the key issues in the inclusion of ethnic minorities in political, social and economic life in Armenia. The paper explores problems of ethnic minorities participation and underlines the importance of the review of the legal framework and its ability to tackle problems more successfully. It acknowledges the influence that government's strategy toward ethnic minorities may have on a democratic development of the country. Turning to ethnic minorities, the paper supports that all decisions concerning ethnic minorities life in Armenia should be developed and implemented with active participation of representatives of all ethnic minorities in Armenia. These representatives might be given a new role in relation to development and implementation not only laws concerning ethnic minorities but in all laws in Armenia. They would have the lead role in providing education and creating the long-term vision for their compatriots in order to achieve more participation in all spheres of political, economical and social life in Armenia.

It was quite difficult to obtain necessary data. In-depth interviews were used with representatives of ethnic minorities, government officials and officials at the educational institutions in order to gather necessary data. Also legal documents, laws, Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, the First Report of the Republic of Armenia, United Nations Development Program's Reports as well as academic literature was used.

Regarding participation of ethnic minorities in political, social, economic life in general and in public administration in particular there are two contradictory opinions. It is stated in all official documents that ethnic minorities are enjoying all rights and privileges of the Title Nation - Armenians. However representatives of ethnic minorities argue that their rights are left on paper only. Currently there are only few representatives of ethnic minorities in Armenia working in governmental structures – but the fact of their existence is used from the official side as an indicator of non-discriminatory attitude towards ethnic minorities.

However policy of integration of Armenia into European and International communities emphasized necessity of reconsideration of laws concerning ethnic minorities. Currently the draft law on ethnic minorities is under development. Representatives of ethnic minorities had a chance to actively participate in discussions of the draft. Currently there are three educational institutions where public administration and management: 1) the Yerevan State University; 2) the American University of Armenia and; 3) the Academy of Public Administration. However, according to officials at abovementioned educational institutions, not a single representative of ethnic minorities are enrolled in public administration programs.

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## 1. Introduction



Armenia is a small, landlocked country on a difficult way of transition to democracy and open-market society. Armenia faces many challenges of all transitional countries. Armenia was always in the forefront of the democratization process during the past three phases of its recent history. Even as part of the USSR (1988-1991), Armenia's independence movement was gaining momentum. Steps toward building democracy were taken during the initial formation of the Third Republic that was created within the Soviet Union and then later as part of the CIS.

Once the Soviet Union disintegrated, Armenia found itself in a most precarious situation, as compared with other post-Soviet newly independent states. Problems common to all the newly independent states, caused by the collapse of the centralized economy, were exacerbated in Armenia by the consequences of the earthquake, the conflict with a neighboring country as well as by refugees and an economic blockade.

Nonetheless, democratic practices in a number of sectors of immediate significance for individual citizens have yet to reach satisfactory levels. One such area in need of much improvement is an inclusion of ethnic minorities in decision-making processes in all aspects of country's life.

## 2. Ethnic minorities in Armenia

### 2-1. The concept of ethnic minorities

According to a common definition, a national minority is a numerically non-dominant group of people characterized by the ethnic, linguistic and religious features differentiating it from the rest of the population. Meanwhile, members of a given community have to display, at least implicitly, a sense of solidarity aimed at preserving the common culture, traditions, religion and language<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the minority status is determined not only by or not to the measure of its originality or possession of certain discriminatory features, self-awareness, etc., but rather by the collective volition of its membership. However, the subject in this connection may be still more clarified with regard to contemporary realities by adding two points<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Garnik Asatryan, Victoria Arakelova, The ethnic minorities of Armenia

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- The concept of ethnic minority is relevant only with regard to the politically organized ethnic domination, i.e. when there is a state-forming or the Title Nation, as it were. Otherwise, the national units, independent of their numerical strength, within the formations having no politically dominating ethnos, have to be regarded as part of the total population mosaic of the given area.

Thus, the national minority is explicated solely within the framework of a political entity: a state and autonomy, etc.

- One represents a national minority if one is a citizen of the given entity or, in certain cases, has a long-time residence permit.

Although the total weight of national minorities remains numerically within three percent of the population, Armenia may easily be regarded as a multi-national country, the status of minority being a non-quantitative factor. Inhabiting Armenia today are about twenty ethnic units, mainly Yezidis, Russians, Greeks, Assyrians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Jews, Kurds, Georgians, most of those have their own mother states, except the Yezidis, the Assyrians and the Kurds. Most speak the languages of the Indo-European family<sup>4</sup>, the Iranian Group being represented by the Yezidis and Kurds, while the Slavic Group by Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Poles; the German Group by Germans and the Greek Group by Greeks. The Assyrians and Jews are carriers of Semitic dialects, while the language of Georgians belongs to the Kartvelian Group of the Ibero-Caucasian family.

Armenia is regarded as a country with an ambiguous ethnic climate among counties in the same group such as Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan<sup>5</sup>. This group of countries is slowly undergoing economic, political, and social changes. Institutions and democratic practices are developing but are not yet fully established. Legislation in these countries began to deal with the protection of minorities only after international pressure from the minorities' motherland. However as many Armenians are scattered worldwide and are ethnic minorities in many countries, the understanding of problems of ethnic minorities in Armenia are considerably higher.

## ***2-2. Composition of ethnic minorities***

According to last census ethnic minorities in Armenia are less than 3 % of population. Various sources suggest different numbers and even representatives of ethnic minorities are not informed about exact numbers. However migration waves from Armenia always included representatives of ethnic minorities, and as their leaders suggest migration will continue from Armenia despite considerable improvements of economic and political situation in Armenia.

Table 1: The number of ethnic minorities according to UNESCO<sup>6</sup> is :

Ethnic minority	Population
Yezidis	40000
Assyrians	7000
Greek	6000
Molokans-	5000
Jewish-	700
Polish-	236

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Petra Kovac

<sup>6</sup> www.unesco.org

Belorussians-	140
Georgians-	110
Russians-	no data
Kurds-	no data
Ukrainians-	no data
<b>Total</b>	122,186, which is 3.8% percent of the population (3.2 mln)

### ***2-3: Protection of human rights of ethnic minorities in Armenia***

Since the independence in 1991 Armenia has adopted the policy of integration in the International and European structures and in the international community in general. The precondition for that is the compliance with the international standards in the sphere of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Armenia signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The Advisory Committee established in accordance with the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 10 June 2002 its Opinion on the implementation of the above-mentioned Convention in Armenia.

With regard to the Republic of Armenia, the implementation of the Framework Convention should be considered in the context of political, demographic, historical, social-economic distinctiveness of Armenia and some difficulties imposed by the geographical situation of Armenia. It is necessary to take into account that the obligations taken within the Framework Convention, are being further strengthened by the other international treaties of the Council of Europe, which are in force for Armenia, namely, the Convention for the Protection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms, its Additional Protocols No1, No 4 and No 7, as well as European Charter For Regional or Minority Languages<sup>7</sup>.

In June 2000 by order of the President of the Republic of Armenia Co-ordination council of national minorities of the Republic of Armenia under the advisor to the President of the Republic of Armenia was established. The purpose of this Council, is to provide the protection of national minorities, to activate their inter-community relationships, as well as to make more effective the State care of the problems of education, culture, legal and other problems. It shall be noted that the Decree of the President followed the first conference of representatives of national minorities which took place on the 12 March 2000.

In January 2004 Department for problems of ethnic minorities and religious organizations at the Government of Armenia was established, currently led by Dr. Hranush Kharatyan.

The government of Armenia attaches great importance to the establishment of appropriate legislative framework, and to the reforming of the existing legislation. Adoption of Law on National Minorities, and establishing a Department for problems of ethnic minorities and religious organizations in the structure of the government in 2004 are very important steps in achieving this goal

As a result of long discussions, the amended draft of the Law on “National Minorities” has been submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia. Representatives of all national minorities participated in discussions. Taking into account the concern of the Committee, that the expression of “national minorities” is not clearly defined in Armenian legislation, this problem has been appropriately addressed in the draft<sup>8</sup>.

In order to guarantee the successful implementation of the Framework Convention, Armenia will create the relevant legislative framework. The legislative regulations will provide an opportunity to solve many problems, which Government of Armenia are practically addressing for the preservation and protection of the languages, culture and history of national minorities.

<sup>7</sup> The Comments of the Republic of Armenia Regarding the “Opinion on Armenia” adopted by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

With regard to the protection of the rights of national minorities, the rights of the persons, belonging to the national minorities, are divided into 2 groups<sup>9</sup>:

- General rights, by which they have absolutely the same rights as every citizen of the Republic of Armenia,
- Ethnic-specific rights, for the realization of which the draft provides full guarantees. The ethnic-specific rights are defined as those related to national (ethnic) traditions, customs, religious beliefs and conscience, preservation of national language, as well as the rights of organizing and participating in the ceremonies as per their national (ethnic) traditions, customs and religious beliefs etc.

The National Assembly adopted the draft law on “Principles of the Cultural Legislation” by the first reading. The draft law especially provides support within the state programme to the culture of national minorities.

#### ***2-4: Education of ethnic minorities***

Educational system of Armenia has no restriction whatsoever for any national minority. They are equal to Armenians and they can have every opportunity to receive any education available for Armenians.. The children of the representatives of national minorities are free to choose classes, conducted on their own national language, if such classes exist. In case of absence of such classes, the children belonging to national minorities can study in schools or classes with state language.

The Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia confirms the right of education of every citizen, in State secondary educational institutions education is free of charge. Every citizen is entitled to receive higher education and other specialized education free of charge and on a competitive basis, in State educational institutions. Though there are not any separate schools for national minorities, however, there are schools where the lessons are organized in their native languages. There are also specialized schools.

The Articles 36 and 37 of the Constitution completely guarantee the representatives of national minorities to have freedom of literary, artistic scientific and technical creation, benefit from the achievements of scientific progress and to participate in the cultural life of society. From this point of view the Nations Union from its first day up to now has organized more than 30 arrangements as well as meetings with heads of the Republic of Armenia, clergy, foreign representations, representatives of European Union. The festival on national cultures, organizing 3 years uninterruptedly and denoted to Independence of Armenia shall be mentioned in these arrangements. This arrangement became a tradition<sup>10</sup>.

The fact that the examinations for the University admission are being conducted in Armenian language is because 98-99% of applicants are Armenians and there is a lack of teachers with the relevant qualifications. There are several international and foreign higher educational institutions, where the studies are carried out in foreign language. Due to their wish the representatives of national minorities may study in such institutions. However, main part of national minorities prefers Russian language as medium of instructions.

Hiwever education of ethnic minorities remains a serious problem. It is difficult to establish schools with national minorities' languages, as the national minorities are scattered in Armenia so it is technically impossible to establish separate classes for any national minority.

The study of the national language /Assyrian, Yezidi/ of national minorities regulates by the educational curriculum for 2002-2003 educational year<sup>11</sup>. According to the curriculum, in the classes from 1 to 4, two hours are provided for

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<sup>9</sup> The Comments of the Republic of Armenia Regarding the “Opinion on Armenia” adopted by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

the subjects of Russian language and literature each in the schools/classes/ comprised of national minorities; for the classes from 5 to 10, one hour is provided for national language and literature; in the classes from 7 and 9 the schools /classes/ may decide to give one hour for the study of national minority history, if necessary, from the time foreseen for the study of universal history /.

However the school examinations are not organized only in Armenian. The schools/classes/ where the education is carried out in Russian, the examinations are in Russian.

## ***2-5: National communities of Armenia***

Pursuant to the data provided by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia before the application of the requirements of the Law “On entering into force of the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia”, the following national communities have been registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia:

- Jewish community of Armenia,
- Syrian Association “Atur”,
- “Ponti” Republican Union of Greeks in Armenia,
- Council of Kurdish intellectuals of the Republic of Armenia,
- “Committee Kurdistan”,
- “National Union of Yezides”,
- Council of Orthodox Believers Trustees,
- Jewish Cultural Centre “Menorah”,
- Non-governmental Organisation of Greeks of Armenia and Artsakh,
- “Patriada” of Greeks of Armenia,
- “Nations Union of the Republic of Armenia”,
- Community “Agbiur” of Germans of the Republic of Armenia,
- “Ukraine” Federation of Ukrainians of Armenia,
- Greek Federation of Armenia,
- “Beriozka” Charitable Union of Russians,
- “Polonia” Charitable Non-governmental Organisation of Co-operation of the Poles,
- Kurd-Yezidi Community,
- “Phaeton” Greek Community,
- “Slavonic cultural, sport, health centre”
- National Union of Yezides of the world,
- Syrian Youth Centre “Ashur”,
- “Ponti” Greek Community of Vanadzor,
- “Romeos” Greek Community of Alaverdi,
- Greek Community of Anastas,
- “Belarus” Community of Belorussians of Yerevan” of Armenia,
- “Olympus” Greek Community of Noyemberyan,
- Congress of Cultural Non-governmental Organisation of Russian Communities of the Republic of Armenia,
- “National committee of Yezides” non-governmental organisations<sup>12</sup>.

However lack of coordination and support between various organizations of ethnic minorities makes impossible any coordinated effort for lobbying interests of ethnic minorities. Regarding the press it shall be noted that 10 magazines and newspapers in Russian language are being published in Armenia. Subject to data furnished by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia up to 1999 <sup>13</sup>, the following Mass media (magazines and publications) of national minorities have been registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia:

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<sup>12</sup> 13 non governmental organizations of national minorities were reregistered according to the provisions of the law on application of the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia

<sup>13</sup> The Comments of the Republic of Armenia Regarding the “Opinion on Armenia” adopted by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

1. "Russkiy dom" (Rosia community)
2. "Dnipro" (Ukraine charitable fund)
3. "Ria taza" (Kurd community)
4. National union "Voice of Yezides"
5. "Barekamutyun" (Kurd-Armenian friendship)
6. "Botan" (Committee Kurdistan)
7. "Shangal" (National community of Yezides)
8. "Sinchar" (Community of Kurd-Yezidi friendship)
9. "Kohelet" (Jewish community)
10. "Panagia" monthly magazine

## ***2-6: Problems of ethnic minorities***

A lot of problems in the field of performance of national minorities rights are stipulated only by hard economic situation not allowing to consider their requirements in social sphere, in employment, cultural, educational and health where are concentrated the fundamental interests of national minorities. The draft Law on national minorities contemplates freedom of political, economic, social, judicial, ethnical, linguistic, cultural and religious rights, providing of educational right and other, also are contemplated other norms which shall guarantee their right to participate in governance.

Now some amendments are being prepared as in Electoral Code, as in the Constitution<sup>14</sup>. It is also important to engage the Representatives of national minorities in the works of governmental, judicial and local administrative structures. Now 15 Representatives of national minorities have managing posts in villages<sup>15</sup>, local self-government bodies. It is contemplated that soon in regional governmental and in local self-governmental bodies shall be committees and relevant structural divisions. The Representatives of national minorities may establish consultative services on public basis, the formation and performance procedure of which shall be defined by appropriate bodies.

The electoral Code was adopted on 17 February of 1999. Subject to the Constitution the citizens of the Republic of Armenia have right of election, regardless national, racial, sexual, linguistic belonging, believe, political or other persuasions, social origin, property or other conditions have the right to elect and to be elected. Any restriction of the right of election concerning to foregoing principles shall be prosecuted by law.

In educational State policy is important that the Republic of Armenia declares and guarantees the development of educational sphere as important factor in confirming of State. The basis of State policy in educational sphere is national school, the main goal of which is the formulation of compatriot educated by the spirit of humanism and of persons having duly professional training. The State provides the preservation and development of educational sphere by State budget financing, the capacities of which are determined in conformity with State programme on educational development.

Considering the principles of State policy in the sphere of education (education in the spirit of humanism, formation of relevant world view in some spheres, providing of democratic principles in the sphere of education, integration into the International educational system, secular nature of education in educational institutions, reasonable independence of educational institutions and availability, continuance of education and others), the Republic of Armenia ensures the right of education regardless of national origin, race, sex, language, creed, political or other persuasion social origin, wealth or other status. The Law determines the restrictions of right in respect of professional education. The State assists the participation of Armenian Diaspora in educational process.

Currently Armenia passes through hard economic realities and migration from country including ethnic minorities is large scale. During 1993-1994 there was a real wave of Assyrian, Russian, Yezidi and Greek emigrants. That trend continues and people generally leave forever. But economic reasons for migration are accompanied curiously by problems of education and language.

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<sup>14</sup> First Report of the Republic of Armenia Pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 25 of the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

Russians and Russian-speaking people live in Armenia not only due to economic difficulties, but also being displeased by restrictions of Russian language use. Russian was used widely in Armenia, and all ethnic minorities except Yezidis and Kurds received Russian education. When Russian schools were closed all that people start to migrate from Armenia in order to provide education in Russian, to find the prospects of further development. The largest wave was in 93-94.

By the order of the President of Armenia Mr. Razmik Davoyan organized the first Congress of ethnic minorities in 2000. The main result was establishment of Coordination Council called to resolve the problems of ethnic minorities. Each of them has 2 representatives in 24-seats Council. Despite the fact that it was established under the auspices of the Advisor to the President, its legal status remains uncertain.

According to Razmik Davoyan, Advisor of the President of Armenia, one of the main problems is the lack of common and coordinated approach in relations of ethnic minorities with state structures. That means that each NGO and even individual is trying to resolve particular problem without account of general issue. The Congress of ethnic minorities envisions its mission to generalize and make visible all issues concerning ethnic minorities. Being elected by the will of these minorities the Council could collect, process, and analyze all issues in order to present complete and streamlined requests to corresponding state structures

Moreover as Yuri Yakovenko, The member of Coordination Council on National Minorities (Russian Community) emphasizes the problem with majority of national minorities living in the Republic of Armenia is that Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Greeks, Jews, Poles, others are oriented towards Russian, rather than Armenian, culture. Maybe that is the tragedy for ethnic minorities. The historical ground existed there were 89 Russian and 29 mixed schools in Yerevan during 70-ies. As a result, Russians migrating from Armenia motivated by fact that it's impossible to get good Russian education here.

The Government of Armenia made definite steps recently. Several years ago the special Concept on improvement of Russian in the republic was accepted, but still it remains on the paper, not implemented. But currently it doesn't work except one provision: numerous schools in Yerevan and regions have bilingual classes, as well as classes of intensified study of Russian. Unfortunately, lack of methodology for bilingual education and lack of special textbooks and prepared specialists creates problems.

However as Shavarsh Kocharyan, the member of National Assembly (Parliament) of Armenia noted experience indicates that ethnic minorities are interested to study Russian rather than their mother tongue. It is common phenomenon for both ethnic minorities and majority – in such unfavorable economic conditions people who plan to migrate insist on better knowledge for foreign languages for their children in order to make them more prepared to new environment.

Today there is no parliamentarian representing interests of ethnic minorities in the National Assembly of Armenia. Representation in the parliament would allow ethnic minorities to present their problems at the highest legislative level, as well as would facilitate the approval of new laws and their further implementation. Yezidis, Kurds, Assyrians, other ethnic minorities has such right and it seems that there is no obstacle since Constitution of Armenia provides equal rights. But 97% of country populations are Armenians and it makes the election of ethnic minorities' representatives impossible.

## ***2-7: Reports on ethnic minorities***

Few reports exist regarding problems of ethnic minorities in Armenia. In a research led by Dr. Lucig Danielian and conducted by the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis at the American University of Armenia was made an attempt to determine possibilities for career and personal growth and obstacles for ethnic minorities residing in Armenia. Three questionnaires were developed in order to collect data via in-depth interviews with non-Armenians living in Armenia, with government Armenian officials, and with NGO leaders representing national minorities living in Armenia

### ***Key findings on national minorities living in Armenia<sup>16</sup>***

- All of the national minority leaders interviewed for this study believe that there is discrimination against the participation of minority groups in government at all levels and in politics in general.

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<sup>16</sup> Life of non-Armenians in Armenia, Armenia 2020 scenario project.

- Most of the NGO leaders would like to see a quota system in place for national minorities in the National Assembly and in civil service jobs.
- Most of the national minority leaders believe that discrimination against ethnic groups is widespread in education, business, and culture.
- When asked about the most important points that should be included in a law on national minorities, aspects that were mentioned included quotas for civil service jobs, representation in the National Assembly, primary school education in the languages spoken by national minorities, provisions that will make it illegal and punishable to discriminate against anyone based on ethnic origin, freedom of religion, clear definitions on which groups are national minorities and who qualifies as a member of a recognized minority, guarantees for the development of culture, education, and religion, and provisions for dual citizenship.
- Changes mentioned by the leaders of NGOs included legislation guaranteeing the equal status and rights of individuals in minority groups, joint cultural activities, support for the preservation of minority cultures and languages, and a more liberal language law.

According to Armenia 2020 report, the lives of national minorities with many generations of history in Armenia do not provide much about which to be optimistic in relationship to Armenia’s “monolithic mono-nationalism.” Findings of the report suggest that national minorities do not see themselves as Armenians, in the sense that most Armenians who have lived in the United States for several generations see themselves as Americans. While national minorities do not report many problems adjusting to Armenian culture and values, they mostly see themselves as unrecognized “outsiders” who are provided only token government assistance and who are accorded little respect in an immensely homogeneous Armenia<sup>17</sup>.

All of the national minorities interviewed for this study<sup>18</sup> believe that there is political discrimination against their national groups – both as representatives in National Assembly and government posts and in civil service positions. And in parallel to the findings for foreign nationals, most national minority groups do not believe that Armenia holds the potential for career and business development. In fact, some national minority group leaders believe that their groups face discrimination in employment and business.

### **3: The Formation of Public Administration in Armenia**

Public administration as an independent subject is new in Armenia, and its introduction is directly connected to the 1991 proclamation of independence and the founding of the Armenian School of Public Administration in 1994<sup>19</sup>. The new system of public administration in Armenia was formed in the context of the establishment of independent statehood and the transition to a market economy<sup>20</sup>. In the new system, the role of the state gains new meaning. It changes from being a body, which dictates its will without restrictions to an assisting partner that takes on a more regulatory function. The chapter looks into the current public administration system through a functional-structural analysis, and examines functional, sectoral, and territorial administration systems. Changes in functional administration have been implemented by transforming Soviet administrative functions and by creating additional mechanisms to deal with new conditions.

The establishment of a market economy in Armenia has increased the importance of functional administration. The role of sectoral administration in restoring the manufacturing, physical, and social infrastructure is addressed and it is argued that the sectoral ministries will gradually evolve into sectoral-functional ones by enhancing their functional responsibilities. Regarding the current processes of decentralization and deregulation, it is suggested that

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<sup>17</sup> Armenia 2020 Scenario Project

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> David Tumanyan, Report on Armenia

<sup>20</sup> UNDP report, 1998

decreasing the responsibilities of Marzpetarans and increasing those of communities would lead to more effective territorial administration. The importance of the creation of legal-social institution of public service is also emphasized, and the basic approaches, principles, and administrative mechanisms for its formation are described.

Despite frequent changes of government—Armenia has had 10 prime ministers since 1990—Armenia has shown continuity in its macroeconomic policies by sticking to fiscal and monetary austerity measures prescribed by Western lending institutions. This, in turn, has been conducive to overall political stability. Nevertheless, the authorities are still far from meeting the minimum standards of good governance because the effectiveness and efficiency of the country's highly centralized government system still leave much to be desired. The absence of an independent civil service and the lack of powers vested in local governments are serious obstacles to better governance. The long-term stability of the government system will remain in question without further democratization of Armenia's political life.

The national minorities are not duly represented in governmental bodies. It should be noted that this is not the result of discriminative policy, but the result of objective reality.

The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia provides absolutely equal rights to all citizens, including suffrage and the right to be elected. The absence of representatives of the national minorities in Parliament is connected with the fact that the national minorities are scattered and are few in numbers. With regard to the granting of the quota, it is supposed, that the definition of special electoral rights and special mechanisms will infringe the rights of the majority.

For executive and other governmental bodies the quotas are not provided, because the prime criteria for selection is merit and nothing could hinder the representative of the national minority with professional qualifications to hold any office. Moreover, the new civil service system has been introduced in Armenia, which made the process of selection more transparent and objective for the entry to the civil service.

### ***3-1. Overview of public administration educational practices***

Currently public administration is taught to various extents at the American University of Armenia, the Armenian Academy of the Public Administration, Yerevan State University, and the Yerevan State Institute for the National Economy<sup>21</sup>.

The American University of Armenia was established in 1991 at the same time Armenia gained independence and is an affiliate of the University of California system. The University is the joint undertaking of the ROA Ministry of Education and Science and the American University of Armenia Corporation (AUAC). AUA is the first university located outside of the United States and its territories to be granted candidacy for accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of the U.S. Department of Education's six accrediting associations for higher education. The American University of Armenia teaches public administration in its Graduate School of Political Science and International Affairs. Courses include an introduction to public administration, public administration in Central Europe, public financing and budgets, public personnel administration, and several courses on policy-making and analyses. Moreover students are taught democratic theory, economic theory, Armenian legislative processes, and Armenian Government structures and processes. Research methods in political science and the major quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies and policy evaluation are covered. All courses are aimed to prepare a new generation of policy-makers, policy analysts, and public administrators. The graduates of the Department of Political Science and International Affairs are working successfully in the government of Armenia, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

The Government's Armenian School of Public Administration was renamed the Academy of Public Administration in 2002. The Academy now operates under the aegis of Civil Service Council and has the extensive mandate of civil service training and the organization of this training through a variety of educational entities. The Academy's public administration program includes political science, law, economics and the organizational aspects of public administration.

The Academy implements post-graduate specialized education and its curriculum was developed and implemented with assistance of the European Union TACIS program. The mission of the Academy is "to provide Republic of Armenia with administration officers prepared in accordance with modern requirements, who are able to work in

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<sup>21</sup> [www.unpan1.org](http://www.unpan1.org)

conditions of political democracy and transition of economies to market relations.” The full-time education program prepares new specialists in “Public Administration and Local Government.” Admissions are carried out in competitive basis and the graduates receive a diploma authorized by the Government of Armenia. The Academy’s Department for Improvement of Professional Skills and Retraining of Specialists provides in-service training for members of the Armenian Government. The Academy prepares tests for the attestation of civil servants. According to a recent Academy’s report, more than 2,000 civil servants at central and local levels have been trained.

Aspects of public administration are taught at Yerevan State University in the economic department, but the University does not offer a specialized degree. Courses include administrative law, comparative administrative law of foreign countries, the political system of the Republic of Armenia, authority, government economic regulations, and principles of management and budgeting. Some aspects of public administration are taught at the Yerevan State Institute for the National Economy. Courses taught by the Faculty of Management include administrative theory, organizational theory, public and municipal administration, financial management, organization of administrative decision-making processes, personnel management and strategic management.

The Government of Armenia recognizes the importance of education for public administrators and with the introduction of the 2001 Law on Civil Service introduced requirements for in-service education of civil servants that will lead to new education programs. For example, beginning in 2004, the Civil Service Council will administer a competition among institutions of higher education for the development of new in-service curricula.

Enrollment process in all abovementioned educational institutions is the same for all nationalities inhabiting in Armenia. There are no quotas for ethnic minorities, as well as any formal or legal restrictions. But the fact remains that there is no single representative of ethnic minorities enrolled of any of abovementioned educational programs.

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