

“An EU in change: what effects on relations with Armenia?”
28 July 2009

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Executive summary

For Brussels and the EU, 2009 is the year of big change. Changes in the leadership of all EU institutions have already begun or are immanent – Armenia could soon see a complete replacement of the EU decision makers responsible for Caucasus matters and even the structural rules of the game could change before the end of the year.

We argue that the train towards an intensified co-operation between the EU and Armenia is in full momentum and will not be significantly hampered by the internal political procedures of the EU. On the contrary, it is likely that after the inward-looking phase, the EU will have more of the tools at its disposal, which are necessary to live up to the promises and goals of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

Delays and “absence of interest” from the EU side are possible only for a very limited period. Essentially, this concerns the time between today and mid October 2009. Then, the people in new

positions will have to make a start, courtesy visits, present their plans etc. This can mean a period of increased activity. Overall, the following impacts can be foreseen.

The European Parliament (EP) has just had its constituting session, meaning that after this week, most positions should be clear and by 20 July, all positions will be clear. Then the EP will have a new President (Jerzey Buzek, former Polish Prime Minister, EPP), a new chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee and a new chair of the Caucasus Delegation. Our first analysis shows that the EP will fully maintain its strong interest in Eastern Europe and even increase that. The most visible sign of that will be the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly for Relations with the Countries of Eastern Neighbourhood (EURONEST) made up of 60 members of the EP delegations and 60 members from the parliaments of the EaP countries. The EP has a positive history of dealing with Armenia. It has been the first large international assembly to recognise the Genocide in 1986. With the 2004 EU enlargement, it has internalised a sound understanding of the situation of post-soviet countries and generally follows very practical and idealist approaches compared to usual diplomatic standards. The internal spectrum is broad and will remain balanced, with a tendency to preserving Human Rights and simply trying to “help” peace and prosperity in Eastern Europe.

We consider the EP a key institution for Armenia to engage with more strongly now. Its influence will increase heavily under the new Lisbon Treaty and its links reach deep into the party systems of all 27 EU member states. It is also likely to influence the European Commission much stronger than in the past, which could become visible during the approval procedure of the Commission’s college this autumn.

The Commission is currently undergoing a period without leadership, but the apparatus continues to function. While Commissioners are job-hunting, the departments responsible for the EaP are working hard on concrete EaP action plan proposals. The new Commission will also need to decide on whether to install a Commissioner dedicated to nothing but the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) or not. This seemingly technical decision on the portfolios will have greater implications, once (and if) the new Lisbon Treaty will be in place. Then the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will also be the Council’s High Representative for foreign affairs (double hat), giving him essentially the power of an EU Foreign Minister. But the task may be too large to allow for enough focus on the ENP, which requires many detailed actions for each country and seems better placed solely in the Commission structures.

The Council is in a similar situation as the Commission, with the head, Javier Solana, declared to leave but the apparatus continuing to work. The Council anyway acts most of the time through its Special Representative, Peter Semneby, who will stay in office until early next year, and through the Council’s rotating Presidency. The Swedish Presidency has, like most Presidencies, put the main focus on the big international topics in foreign affairs.

To conclude, the new personnel in Brussels offers a wide array of opportunities as agendas are not predetermined for the time after their arrival. EuFoA strongly encourages all Armenian stakeholders to engage heavily with the new decision makers. If we do not do it, others will. However, the overarching theme remains one of an EU strongly committed to fostering peace and prosperity in its Eastern Neighbourhood and in particular in the Caucasus and Armenia.

Introduction

For Brussels and the EU, 2009 is the year of big change. Changes in the leadership of all EU institutions have already begun or are imminent – Armenia could soon see a complete replacement of the EU decision makers responsible for Caucasus matters, and even the structural rules of the game could change before the end of the year.

The primary purpose of this document is to shed light on the EU decision-making mechanisms, which are complicated during this transitional period, with a special view to the ENP and EaP. It is noteworthy to emphasise that confusion over the EU institutional arrangements is widespread among the general public, even in the European public.

This document aims at describing and clarifying the role the EU institutions have in shaping EU-Armenia relations, it analyses the current political and institutional dynamics in Brussels, and provides future policy options to decision makers on both sides.

European citizens have elected a new and more conservative EP.

The next steps ahead are the renewal of the European Commission, whose mandate is set to expire on 31 October 2009, and the setting up of new political checks and balances in Council-Commission relations.

At the same time, after a first failure in June 12 2008, the second Irish referendum on the ratification of Lisbon Treaty, which gives more power to the Institutions and more credibility to the Union on Foreign and Security Policy issues, scheduled for October 2009, is around the corner.

Moreover, Sweden, together with Poland a firm advocate of Eastern Partnership, took over its semester of EU Presidency on 1 July 2009.

In the meantime, the process aimed at transforming the EU into a stronger, more coherent and consistent actor in the global stage is being marred simultaneously by one of the worst economic recessions since the inception of the EU, a historically low turnout in the June EP elections, persistent uncertainty over the outcome of the Irish referendum, and political unease of growing numbers of MEPs over the candidacy of José Manuel Barroso for the second term at the helm of the Commission. Thus, more variables are adding to the already complicated political and institutional situation in Brussels.

Yet the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all 27 member states remains the biggest question mark in the process of strengthening EU governance. The same document, also referred to as the Reform Treaty, eases the EU decision-making process in the field of Foreign and Security Policy. While most of the EU prepares for the arrival of the new Treaty, a number of political commentators question the likeliness of a “Yes” vote during the early October Irish referendum. Having a strong, reliable and coherent EU, governed by the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty would be good for Armenia, *tout court*.

This document analyses the above mentioned relationship departing from the actions of the three main institutions of the EU: the European Parliament, where Europe’s *demos* is represented, with no explicitly binding instruments on foreign policy decisions but high influence on the overall EU policy and the ENP budget; the European Commission, the EU’s executive branch, which conducts EU’s “low-politics” in international arena and has high control over funds and technical cooperation; and

the Council, the main decision-maker, where Member States are sitting and formulating the EU's "high politics" when it comes to the Union's Foreign and Security Policy.

Finally, the analysis of the EU-Armenia relations would not be complete without a forecast of the EU's external action's transformation according to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty.

All the above-mentioned dynamics are certainly relevant for Armenia's European aspirations, as well as for its shorter-term foreign policy goals.

1. EU-Armenia relations and the 2009 electoral results

Although the European Parliament does not have official power over foreign policy issues, it influences strongly EU views on external policy challenges.

The EP has been the most active, creative and audacious of the EU institutions when it comes to fostering CFSP/ESDP, and ENP in particular.

The content of this chapter answers to the following questions: What is new in the 2009-2014 EP Legislature? What is the EP's role in the EU decision making when it comes to ENP/EaP?

1.1 The new European Parliament

The European Parliament is the only EU institution directly elected on a strictly European mandate.

The European elections of 4-7 June 2009, involving 375 million European citizens electing 736 MEPs, were held simultaneously in 27 countries and ended in a clear victory for the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) and a setback for the Party of European Socialists (PES), recently renamed in Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

Electoral results display a more conservative European Parliament, with the centre-right European People's Party on the lead, followed by the centre-left Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe), The Greens/European Free Alliance, the GUE/NGL (European United Left / Nordic Green Left), the euro-sceptic European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the right-wing Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) and the NI (Non-Attached) group of independents and the extreme-right.

1.2 The EP's role in boosting ENP and supporting EaP

Since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the EP has been progressively gaining power, in terms of praxis, in the field of the Union's external relations. Even if it has only a consultative voice in the process of the making of the Union's foreign policy, since it bears the direct mandate of the European citizens, its decisions in this field are not secondary at all. In fact, it is particularly true when we think about the inclusion of Armenia, together with Georgia and Azerbaijan, into the ENP, or the crucial emphasis the European Parliament has given to the Eastern Partnership.

Any considerations about the future standing of the EP when it comes to EU-Armenia relations will tend to be incomplete, if they are detached from more general contexts of EU-Russia and EU-Turkey relations and the arch-issue of the Union energy security, and security, broadly defined.

According to Brussels-based political analysts the new EP will focus more and more on foreign and security policy matters, but in a more hands-on and less declaratory fashion than during the past five years, especially if the Lisbon Treaty enters into force and, with it, the new provisions that could give

the Parliament a crucial role in funding both the External Action Service and the Union's peace-building operations abroad¹.

It has been argued that, even if in the EP values, in terms of commitment for the defence of human rights and democratisation prevail over strictly geopolitical interests, relations with Russia could improve since they will be seen through the prism of national capitals (principally Berlin, Paris and Rome) and the respective domestic gas monopolists, rather than Brussels, which always suits Moscow fine².

Moreover, the new EP will apparently be less in favour of further enlarging the EU, especially (but not exclusively) to Turkey: people often forget that the EP has ratifying power over accession treaties.

With regard to the EaP, one cannot foresee any drastic changes in the EP's proactive approach, and the increase in Polish influence within the EPP and the presidency of the first two and half years of the EP set to go the former Polish PM Jerzy Buzek will ensure continuity in this field.

More challenges could come from the changes on the side of the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET). The EP chose Gabriele Albertini (EPP-ED, Italy) as Chairman and Fiorello Provera (EFD, Italy) as Vice-Chairman, while the most likely administrative head of the Committee is Silvio Gonzato, a brilliant Italian with lots of foreign affairs experience. This Italian dominance could mean that the AFET will focus more naturally on the Southern dimension, rather than the EaP, but this remains to be seen.

And last but not least, in mid-April 2009, the Parliament has taken the final decision to establish a Parliamentary Assembly for Relations with the Countries of Eastern Neighbourhood (EURONEST). This assembly will have 120 members - 60 from the European Parliament and 60 from the parliaments of partner States - with the Parliament's delegation made up of members of the relevant bilateral delegations. This initiative will be extremely important for a deeper EU engagement with the EaP countries, since it will bring a more multilateral character to this nexus and it will have a public effect as well as a strong political networking effect.

All this considered, it is reasonably safe to say that the new European Parliament is going to uphold its previous active standing in the engagement of EaP countries, and Armenia in particular.

Moreover, some key supporters of deeper EU-Armenia relations have been re-elected and others are entering the Parliament for the first time. It is vital for the EU-Armenia relations to seek them out, and to engage them in a mutually constructive manner and exchange expertise and feedback.

2. The new Commission and the EaP

This chapter contains an analysis of the role of the Commission in the field of the Union's foreign affairs with an eye on further political and institutional transformations that are going to be unleashed following the most recent electoral results. In particular, it focuses on the new Commission, the future role of the Commission in External Relations according to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, and the implementation of the EaP.

¹EPC (European Policy Centre), *Post-Election Analysis: Between apathy and anger but no earthquake*, Commentary, 09 June 2009, Brussels, <http://www.epc.eu/en/pb.asp?TYP=TEWN&LV=187&see=y&t=32&PG=TEWN/EN/detailpub&l=12&AI=982>

² Gross D., *A More Conservative Europe and EU*, CEPS Commentary, 08 June 2009, CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies), Brussels

2.1. What is the fate of the Commission and its Commissioner for External Relations?

The Commission of 27 member states consists of 26 Commissioners plus the President who are responsible for a diverse range of portfolios. The Commission President is nominated by the member states, based on consensus, and then approved by the European Parliament. The President-elect and governments then agree on the Commissioners. The composition of the Commission is then approved by the European Parliament, following hearings of candidate Commissioners before parliamentary committees.

The European Commission is a key player when it comes to laying down the terms of cooperation with ENP/EaP countries and their implementation. It is also the only EU institution that can initiate legislation.

During the June Brussels Council of Heads of States and Governments, José Manuel Barroso, the incumbent President of the Commission has obtained the nomination of the member states for a second term in office.

The next step ahead will be the approval of Barroso’s candidature by the Parliament.

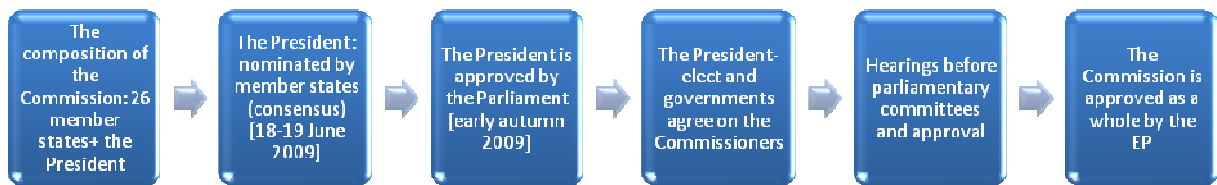


Figure: Process of appointment of the Commission

Despite pressure from the Swedish EU Presidency, the member states, and the EPP to vote for Barroso’s candidature at the EP’s first session in mid July, the majority of the political groups have been able to postpone the vote until autumn. This will grant political groups, either categorically or partially opposed to Barroso’s second term, more room for manoeuvre in placing their policy priorities on the next Commission’s agenda.

The timing of the vote is also crucial. While the centre-left Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats has cut a deal with the EPP to vote for the President of the Commission in September, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), which opposes Barroso’s candidature, wants to postpone the vote until after the Irish referendum for the Lisbon Treaty scheduled for 2 October. In that case, Lisbon Treaty rules on the appointment of the Commission’s President could be applied informally, though they are not formally binding yet. These rules require that at least half of all MEPs be in favour of the new President of the Commission, while according to the current Nice Treaty rules at least half of the voting MEPs support is enough.³

³ Tylor S., *Four groups want to delay Barroso decision*, European Voice, 02 July 2009, Brussels <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/four-groups-want-to-delay-barroso-decision/65364.aspx>

This circumstance will not only affect the likelihood of Barroso's reappointment at the helm of the Commission, but could also influence the choice of the Commissioner for External Relations, and the whole system of decision-making mechanisms in the sphere of the Union's foreign and security policy.

Furthermore, the timing of the vote raises more questions in an effort to forecast the genesis, the nature and the standing of the Commission in issues regarding its external actions. In fact, one of the major changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty for the Union's decision-making mechanisms concerns Foreign and Security Policy.

According to the current rules, the Commissioner for External Relations is responsible for ENP/EaP and the Europe Aid Cooperation Office, while representing the Union towards third countries in accord with the Council's High Representative for the CFSP and the Presidency's foreign minister, the "troika". The outgoing Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner was responsible for coordinating policy with the acting presidency of the Council of the EU, the High Representative for the EU's Common and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and holding consultations with other Commissioners making up the Group of Commissioners on External Relations. This group, chaired by the President of the Commission and the Commissioner for External Relations as Vice-Chair, is composed of Commissioners for Enlargement, Trade, Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid, and Economic and Monetary Affairs. It is clear that such institutional assets, while prioritising consensus between Council and Commission, make the EU policy pipeline delivering foreign policy very tortuous. Furthermore, Commission's and Council's prerogatives in foreign policy issues collide from time to time. In fact, as far as CFSP and ENP are concerned, bivalence between communitarian and inter-governmental policies can be a particularly paralysing factor.

Changing that setup, the Lisbon Treaty stipulates the role of a "double-hatted" High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) combining the functions of the Commissioner for External Relations (currently Benita Ferrero-Waldner) and the European Council's High Representative for CFSP (currently Javier Solana). This new figure will lead the unified External Action Service composed of Council and Commission staff and diplomats from member states. Most importantly, however, the HR/VP will take over the role currently fulfilled by the "troika", answering Henry Kissinger's question: to whom should I call when I want to speak to Europe?

It is clear that, even if the Lisbon Treaty is approved in the Irish referendum, we have to wait until the beginning of 2010 for its formal entry into force. Consequently, it is reasonable to foresee that by that date the next Commission will already be fully operative. It is also reasonable to state that the then Commissioner for External Relations will probably take over the role of the HR/VP.

2.2. A forecast of the Commission's role in shaping EaP

As stated above, it is up to the Commission to conduct negotiations and implement policies envisaged in the framework of the EaP.

In order to dispel confusion about the EaP, it is worth taking a look at the motivations behind it and the goals it intends to achieve.

At the face of it, its genesis was a consequence of last winter's energy crisis and last summer's Russia-Georgia conflict. But in fact, the EU has been looking much longer for something more effective than the ENP but disconnected to a membership perspective. This followed the line that the recent enlargements do not allow for further enlargements in the near future and frankly, many players in

the EU do not want any further enlargements at all. The EU needed an instrument to secure peace, stability and prosperity in its neighbourhood and the ENP incentives applied to its conditionality did not seem to be sufficient to unleash the political and economic transformations envisaged for its Eastern neighbours, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It was also a response to the need to decouple policies and tools intended for ENP's Southern dimension from those for its Eastern dimension.

As far as Armenia is concerned, the EaP can take the existing status of EU-Armenia relations to the level of an Association Agreement (AA). This would be an important step for a more integrated EU-Armenia nexus, as has been the case for the Eastern European and Balkan countries. Furthermore, this would introduce a multilateral dimension, which was missing from the ENP, through regular meetings between Heads of State and Government, and Foreign Ministers. This last feature of the EaP is not secondary for Armenia for meeting the security and societal challenges the country is facing. In this framework, even a free-trade agreement could be included.

The Commission has been very active in beginning preparatory consultations for the implementation of EaP activities. In fact, after the official launch of the EaP at the Prague Summit on 7 May 2009, four platform meetings at the level of senior EU and Eastern Neighbours officials (27+6) took place in June in Brussels. The goal of these meetings was to transform strategic goals of the EaP into action plans in four policy fields: cooperation with civil society, energy security, justice and human rights and economic development. In autumn 2009, working groups will begin meetings aimed at giving more substance to the decisions of the platform meetings. At the end of 2009, a multilateral ministerial council is scheduled to sum up the results of the on-going consultations.

Briefly, the EaP is about deeper and more ambitious co-operation with Eastern Europe's nations. Its emphasis is on energy security, economic development, trade, human rights, democracy and free movement of people. It does not replace formerly agreed ENP Action Plans, but will rather gradually upgrade them.

However, there is still some conceptual ambiguity. The EaP is not enlargement policy, properly conceived. This means that, at an institutional level, it does not fit into enlargement policy, and is too specific to be conceived as foreign policy, *tout court*. Still, considering the EU's need to have stable, prosperous and peaceful partners in the East, it needs to create an ad-hoc institutional instrument at the highest level. From this perspective, if the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force, the "double-hatted" High Representative/Commission Vice-President (HR/VP) will provide for necessary coherence and coordination between Commission and Council. However, it may not be enough. The HR/VP will be dealing with challenges rising from Latin America to Asia/Pacific and Caribbean countries, in addition to ENP/EaP area. The appointment of a European Commissioner for ENP would therefore, be a decisive step in emphasising EU's commitment in this geographic area and will provide for the necessary tools and resources. Such a move will certainly highlight the consistency of the EU's commitment towards its neighbours.

3. The Council – powerful but too busy on high politics?

This chapter will focus on the inter-governmental side of the EU decision making affecting external relations. In particular, it will concentrate on the current Swedish Presidency, the role and the fate of

the EUSR in Southern Caucasus, on the Irish referendum and the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty regarding the Council with an eye on the future of the EaP and EU-Armenia relations.

3.1. Why the Council matters when it comes to EU-Armenia relations

The Council, representing member states, is the main decision-making body of the European Union, especially in the field of foreign and security policy, and shares legislative power with the European Parliament. As stated above, member states are very reluctant to transfer shares of their sovereignty to the Union when it comes to decisions in foreign affairs and security. In fact, the Council acts on its own initiative in the above mentioned policy fields, while the roles of the Commission and Parliament are limited. According to the current rules, the Council is governed by the principle of rotational presidency by member states with a six-month mandate. Sweden is currently presiding the Council and will be followed by Spain in January 2010. At the same time, the Council has a Secretary-General, who is also the Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Also in the case of the Council, the profile of its action in the nearest future will depend on the institutional and political consultations underway, and, most importantly, on the outcome of the Irish referendum.

Beyond that, the future role of the Council on EaP and EU-Armenia relations becomes increasingly difficult to predict, not only because of uncertainty over the Irish referendum on Lisbon Treaty, but mainly because Javier Solana, the acting Secretary General and HR for CFSP, who declared on 4 July his intention not to continue in his position after its expiry date: October 10, 2009.⁴ Given its mainly political profile, the ability of the Council to deliver on CFSP will very much depend on the personality of the incumbent. No candidates for this post are reliably predictable for the time being.

On the other hand, if the Lisbon Treaty is approved, the election of a permanent President of the European Council with a mandate for a term of two and a half years, renewable once, would also follow. Brussels political gossip suggests Carl Bildt (the Swedish foreign minister) and Tony Blair (the British prime minister from 1997 to 2007) to be front-runners for that position. The above mentioned "double-hatted" HR/VP will fill the existing gap in coordination and coherence between the Council and the Commission on CFSP issues.

It is hence conceivable that these changes have a strong impact on possible future developments on Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia's relations with Turkey, effectively adding an EU component to the solution of these issues, depending on their development. But it should not be underestimated that the Council constantly has a full agenda on the big foreign affairs issues, such as Iran, the Middle East, USA, Russia etc. Armenia and the EaP will not be able to dominate the Council's agenda or be a focus point as strong as in the EP or the Commission.

To sum up, while the Council sets mainly the foreign policy doctrine and strategies, the Commission's role is more prominent in implementing them on the ground. However, also the Council operates on the ground through its EUSRs and other tools.

3.2. What is new with the Swedish EU Presidency? And the EUSR?

Ideally, the Swedish Presidency of the EU should be considered good news in terms of boosting EaP. In fact, Sweden, together with Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany has been pushing hard for the

⁴ Vogel T., *Javier Solana : Ten years is enough*, European Voice, 06 July 2007, Brussels <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2009/07/javier-solana-ten-years-is-enough/65413.aspx>

strengthening of the ENP' Eastern dimension. This group of states has been working hard to find consensus with historically more southern-oriented member states like France, Spain and Italy.

However, the first challenge to overcome is the one generated by the impossibility to vote for the Commission's president at the first session of the European Parliament in mid-July 2009. This circumstance can potentially cast a shadow on the Swedish efforts to handle properly the ongoing economic crisis, climate change and EaP. In fact, there is a risk for the EaP to lose priority while the institutions are semi paralysed and the presidency is caught in political consultations internal to the EU.

In any case, the EaP's further substantiation is still on the Swedish agenda and the key word Sweden uses is "greater regional integration". It is evident that Armenia should build on this opportunity by advancing its stance on open borders and regional integration. In fact, there seem to be no mismatches between Armenian and European approaches. The EU has denied financial assistance to the BTK railway, which was meant to by-pass Armenia, and now Armenia should move forward in making sure it is integrated into the trans-regional energy networks. For instance, Nabucco could be the most suitable of these considering the EU willingness to include Iran in the project. As far as the profile of the EUSR in South Caucasus Peter Semneby is concerned, it should be said that he will stay in office until March 2010 and has a chance, during the current Swedish Presidency, to strengthen his influence on the decision making processes at the Council regarding the South Caucasus. The limit of his action in the field of conflict resolution, particularly in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, could be explained by the simple fact that the EU is not a negotiator in that conflict, but rather a supporter of a politically negotiated solution.

Another reason for the Council's low-profile position on Nagorno-Karabakh, of a more endemic nature, is that while the Union has developed advanced doctrines regarding foreign and security policy, it still lacks advanced expertise to combine civil and military aspects of conflict resolution.

Conclusion

While the EU is in transition, the train towards an intensified co-operation between the EU and Armenia is in full momentum and will not be significantly hampered by the internal political procedures of the EU. On the contrary, it is likely that after the inward-looking phase, the EU will have more of the tools at its disposal, which are necessary to live up to the promises and goals of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

The European Parliament, with unprecedented self-confidence is, for the time being, ruling the institutional game. The situation will remain unchanged at least until the vote on the presidency of the Commission.

On the other hand, the Council, where the interests of all member states are represented, badly needs a vote on the Commission as soon as possible in order to begin handling the economic crisis, which is hitting Europe hard.

On the Commission side, José Manuel Barroso, after having secured backing from member states for his candidature for a second term as President of the Commission, is set to compromise in order to get the necessary votes from the EP.

It goes without doubt that political groups represented in the Parliament have a real chance to barter their vote for some top job at the Commission. However, at this stage it would be too adventurous a task to try to “guess” which political force is eyeing up which top job. In any case a certain degree of coherence can be identified if some political forces were lobbying to get the post of the Commissioner for External Relations; it would be in line with the EP’s growing ambitions in this field. Moreover, if and when Lisbon Treaty enters into force, the acting Commissioner’s portfolio will be merged with the powerful position of the “double-hatted” High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) combining the functions of the Commissioner for External Relations and the European Council’s High Representative for CFSP.

Doubts over the likeliness of the Lisbon Treaty ratification add more complexity to the already uncertain picture of the EU’s “internal kitchen”. However, it will be good news for the Union and for its external action in particular.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the Union will have a more powerful EP, which means more legitimacy. The Commission will be more agile and proactive, and the Council more stable and consistent with longer term political agendas.

The Union which will emerge after this transformation, will have the necessary means to reach its declared ambitions when it comes to CFSP. It will act through more simplified decision-making mechanisms and be able to be pro-active in conflict resolution and crisis management.

As for the ENP/EaP, it is neither enlargement nor traditional foreign policy applied to third parties. It means that, at an institutional level it does not fit into enlargement policy and is too specific to be conceived as foreign policy, *tout court*. The setting up of a distinct portfolio at the Commission devoted to the ENP would add consistency to this policy and symbolise the EU’s commitment for this policy area.

To sum up, transition is not necessarily a challenge but definitely an opportunity. Therefore, Armenia should continue a reasonable, pragmatic and flexible approach to the Union, yet being more proactive in order to get full advantage of the current window of opportunity in advancing its own agenda both inside the renewing EU institution and in the national capitals of the member states.

List of acronyms

AA – Association Agreement
AFET – Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament
ALDE – Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
BTK – Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad
CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy
EaP – Eastern Partnership
ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists
EFD – Europe of Freedom and Democracy
ENP – European Neighbourhood Policy
EP – European Parliament
EPP – European People’s Party
ESDP – European Security and Defence Policy
EU – European Union
EUSR – European Union Special Representative
EURONEST – EU-Neighbourhood-East Parliamentary Assembly
GUE/NGL – European United Left/ Nordic Green Left
HR/VP – High Representative/ Vice-President
MEP – Member of the European Parliament
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
NI – Non-Attached
OSCE - The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PES – Party of European Socialists

About EuFoA

European Friends of Armenia (EuFoA) is a young NGO which uses its network to facilitate contacts between Europe and Armenia, promoting good relations and understanding between the two sides, an area which has become one of the top priorities on the EU agenda.

As part of its activity, EuFoA has established the Europe-Armenia Advisory Council. Based in Brussels, the Council is a unique body to promote relations between Europe and Armenia from the European side. Composed of leading representatives from the political, business and cultural spheres from across Europe, it will provide guidance on all major issues in these areas.

For more information on EuFoA and the Europe-Armenia Advisory Council, please visit our website at www.eufoa.org.