



Dr Michael Kambeck
Secretary General
Phone +32 484 75 28 25
Email michael.kambeck@eufoa.org

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 6 March 2012

DCFTA negotiations launched today – EuFoA shortpaper calls for widest possible consensus in Armenia

Today, 6 March 2012, the President of the European Commission, José Barroso, and the Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, officially start the negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). European Friends of Armenia (www.EuFoA.org) has long called for these negotiations and strongly welcomes their launch now. Today, we publish a shortpaper titled “Free trade with Europe: boosting competitiveness and growth” (www.eufoa.org/uploads/Documents/DCFTA_negotiations_launch.pdf). It provides the background information necessary to understand the DCFTA and the Armenian context.

“The DCFTA has the potential to boost the Armenian economy, as it will speed up anyway necessary reforms. If properly implemented, it can offer a new perspective for the Armenian economy, access to the Single European Market, ease the effects of the Turkish border blockade, and generally upgrade Armenia’s standards to a European level.” analyses EuFoA Senior Research Fellow, Dr Sargis Ghazaryan.

“It is good that the Armenian government in recent months found the speed and determination necessary to launch this project. What is needed now is to explain the benefits and challenges to the Armenian public and to create the broadest possible consensus in the society. Taxi drivers, restaurant chefs, banks, international corporations and also the so-called oligarchs – all are united in the interest of a more efficient and growing Armenian market, but all will also be confronted with certain changes and sometimes necessary one-time investments. To make this a success, the country needs to unite behind this new common goal and vision. If this happens, Armenia’s economy has the potential to become something like the new ‘Norway or Switzerland’ of the East.” comments Dr Michael Kambeck, Secretary General of EuFoA.

The shortpaper sheds light on the specific nature of the Armenian economy, trade relations with the EU and which impact the DCFTA can have. It states that the EU seeks a long-term economic partnership to promote trade, investments, market liberalisation and growth, intellectual property rights and European market standards, while reaffirming that such a long-term development can only be successful if it is embedded in a stable system based on democracy and the rule of law. It concludes that the conduct and outcome of the coming parliamentary and presidential elections in Armenia, the continued implementation of the reforms begun now and the increasing support from the EU will determine how long we will have to wait to reap the fruits of the DCFTA.

EuFoA is happy to provide commentary or background analysis in English, German, French, Italian, Polish, Russian and Armenian. Members of the Europe-Armenia Advisory Council may also be available for comments; for enquiries please contact our secretariat.

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

High resolution picture material is always available on our website and upon request. It is free to use with a reference "Copyright: www.EuFoA.org".