
ARMENIA MOVES TOWARD EUROPE WHILE STILL DEPENDENT ON RUSSIA

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Onnik James Krikorian

On January 9, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced his intention to seek EU membership following a public mobilization by extra-parliamentary political forces in support of holding a referendum on such a shift in policy. Although the petition garnered only 60,000 signatures, the Armenian parliament will vote on a corresponding bill (ArmenPress, January 9). The decision marks a further departure from the countrys traditional reliance on Russia that it has held since independence was declared in 1991. Many challenges exist and any path to change the situation is fraught with risks and complications.

Armenias foreign policy has significantly relied on its strategic relationship with Russia, particularly in the areas of defense, energy, and trade. The Russian Federation has also long been Armenias principal ally. In the years following Russias February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, however, Pashinyan has attempted to recalibrate Armenias foreign policy by diversifying its international relationships, particularly with the European Union and the United States. This is compounded with a lack of military support from Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) during and after the war with Azerbaijan in 2020.

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