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DEATH OF A SHEPHERD

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In every culture there exists a traditional sentiment for and nostalgic lure of shepherds and their widespread means of livelihood. Animal husbandry still carries a prominent role and is a major source of income in eastern Anatolia where shepherds are a well-liked and recognized work force. One of them, a Turkish citizen of the age of thirty-five, while grazing his flock, went to retrieve one sheep which trespassed the Armenian border. As a consequence, he became the target of bullets of border guards for this grave security breach, paying for his care of his sheep with his life. May god bless his soul. The disproportionate reaction, difficult to fathom or accept, has shown yet again what sort of a mindset and tendency to violence rules on the Armenian side of the border. The Armenian officials, corroborating the shooting death of the shepherd, nevertheless appeared to wash their hands off the killing by stating that the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Iranian borders are guarded and protected by Russian soldiers in accordance with an agreement signed between the Russian Federation and Armenia in 1992. As a matter of fact, Border Department of Federal Security Services of the Russian Federation has since assumed the responsibility to implement the guarding and protection of Armenias borders with Turkey and Iran. The other two borders of Armenia, with Georgia and Azerbaijan, which used to be internal borders during the Soviet era, although international since, are excluded from the agreement. The Armenian press agencies report, in connection with this latest tragedy, that 4500 Russian soldiers serve at the moment in Armenia. To what extent it can be compatible, for the guarding and protection of one states borders by the soldiers of another; with the concept of state sovereignty is something that befalls on Armenia to decide. On the other hand, it is worth noting that such a state of affairs constitute an exceptional example in the World. On the other hand, Armenia is known to complain and to make it a point to raise at international meetings that the Turkish border is closed to Armenia, because of the continuing occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjoining Azerbaijan territories. It is highly relevant for the international community, first and foremost for the European Union and its member countries, which is preparing to sign an associative and customs union agreement with Armenia, a country that has been occupying illegally one fifth of the territories of its neighbor Azerbaijan for the past twenty-one years while delegating the guarding and protection of its other borders to a third state, to have a fresh look into how serious and credible the call of Armenia to Turkey to open its border can be.

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