



THE FIRST CONVENTION OF EUROPEAN ARMENIANS

October 18 – 19, 2004
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - BRUSSELS

CHARTER OF THE EUROPEAN ARMENIANS CONVENTION

We, European citizens of Armenian origin, distinct, yet integral members of the community of European nations, endowed with and proud of an ancient culture, active participants in the European endeavor to profoundly modify our individual and collective destiny, confident, nevertheless, in our national future as we are in that of humanity, do reaffirm, in these crucial times -- when socio-cultural references are being redefined and geopolitical entities are being reconstituted – the following positions on which our choices and commitments shall be founded.

The Universal Commitment

We subscribe, without reserve, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its formal transcription in the Charter of the United Nations. Whereas, these individual rights are expressed naturally on a collective level by the initiation and affirmation of freely constituted nations, we reaffirm, therefore, the inalienable right of peoples to govern themselves as a legitimate collective extension of individual rights. We remind, however, that the adherence of individuals to groups based on language, culture, religion or history must be based on objective and free consent. Thereby we challenge alterations of identity, culture or history and, in particular, of deformations, distortions, or negations of history, as an attempt on the rights of individuals to state their identity. Within the limits of the preceding principles, that is, by subordinating the legitimacy and legality of all political systems to the referred principles, we tender our confidence to the international, multilateral authorities, profiting from a democratic legitimacy to solve the major challenges facing humanity.



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In fact, we consider humanity one and indivisible and that the major challenges that it faces -- particularly democratic, social and environmental challenges -- will not be overcome without collective effort. Nevertheless, we believe that the level of effort extended by nations in overcoming these challenges must be proportional to their own level of development.

The European Commitment

We consider the European venture as radically innovative as much by its methodology as by its objectives, and adherence to this project aiming at union in the diversity of the peoples of the European Continent. However, we do think that presently, the European Union is incomplete in its democratic structure, representative mostly in an indirect fashion, and that it will not be able to muster a civic adherence without evolving towards a real participatory democracy.

We also believe that this Union must be founded on a collective identity constituted by a history and common socio-cultural references and by shared political values. Therefore, we bring our support to the European Constitution and particularly to the Charter of Fundamental Rights as elements re-enforcing that identity and those shared political values, albeit conscious of the limits and imperfections of these instruments.

We also must remind that, the Armenian people coexisted in the past in direct contact with the Greek world, crucible of European thinking, and that this people has always been the carrier of European thinking in the border zones of Europe. We also remind that the Republic of Armenia is already integrated in the Council of Europe, thus approaching European standards considerably; let us admit, therefore, that this State clearly has the vocation to integrate in terms of the European Union. To that end, we shall do our utmost to bring the Republic of Armenia closer to the Union aiming for that integration; to this end, we shall focus our efforts on the definition of parameters for the ultimate Union.

Meanwhile, we realize that the historic calamities, notably the Genocide suffered in 1915 and the dispossession of Western Armenia which followed it, have given birth to a lasting implantation of an Armenian presence in Western and Central Europe. We proclaim, that through that genocide -- deliberately directed against the nation that



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bore the values of enlightenment in the bosom of the Ottoman Empire – emerges a clear rejection of European modernity on the part of Turkey.

In general, we consider that neither the nations belonging to other cultural spheres, nor the states not sharing European political values have the vocation to integrate with the Union and that their integration would constitute a major threat to the European venture and to its legitimacy. Therefore, we refuse, and would consider as null and void, the accession of present day Turkey, impertinent, negationist and xenophobic towards the European venture. In that context, we confirm, that the political settlement of the Armenian Question by Turkey, as presented by the the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on June 18, 1987, constitutes an unavoidable condition to Turkey's eventual adhesion to the Union; we also reaffirm our adherence to the dispositions stated in that resolution.

In contrast, we observe that the Armenian Diaspora of Europe represents the party of European modernity that fled Turkey. Consequently, we feel that the Union has the specific duty to attend to the preservation and development of this Diaspora, citizen to member states, integral part of the European Community, and whose members enjoy the same rights and submit to the same obligations as the other citizens of the Union. We particularly affirm that the Diaspora, jointly with the member states and the Union's institutions, must be kept alive-- with the assistance of community structures of Armenian identity in Western and Central Europe -- particularly by instruction of the mother tongue, the culture and the history. We must insist on the preservation and development of Western Armenian, now a non-territorial language and an endangered part of the European patrimony.

The Armenian Commitment

We believe that the crime of the Genocide that the Armenian people suffered was never repaired, that this absence of reparation constitutes in itself an aggravation of the crime and that the denial by the responsible State is another. We believe that the responsible State -- by its politics of denial, its continued policy of oppression towards its Armenian minority, its deliberate and uninterrupted destruction of the Armenian archeological patrimony and, as defined by simple application of international law on the succession of States – is the Republic of Turkey.



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We proclaim, that the Armenian people, above all, desires peace, and that this peace can only come through Justice and Truth. Therefore, we call upon international and European institutions to take charge of the Armenian question by the application of pertinent judicial instruments and particularly by the implementation of the 1948 Convention on the prevention and repression of the crime of Genocide. In this context, we feel that Turkey must recognize this Genocide and that this recognition implies, in conformity with International Law and its practice, a moral recognition, reparations and the setting up by the Turkish State institutional mechanisms interdicting the recurrence of such events.

Firmly set on the same foundations of International Law and its practice, and particularly on the Charter of the United Nations, we declare our support to the self-determination of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh). We believe that, during more than ten years, Artsakh demonstrated its capacity to create viable democratic institutions and clearly respects and adheres to International Conventions.

Meanwhile, we shall do our utmost to promote the economic, scientific and cultural development of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh. We shall endeavor to set in place or re-enforce the structures needed for such development.

We shall also promote respect for democracy in these Republics and the Republics of Southern Caucasus. We specifically call upon the Republic of Georgia to respect the civil, political and cultural rights of the Armenians of Javakhq and to promote their economic and cultural growth.

We shall also assist, within our means, the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh in their efforts of integration into international structures or help them develop new relations within these structures. We shall work for the strengthening of ties between the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh, as well as between the Diaspora and these Republics and, with this in mind, we shall pay particular attention to the survival and development of the Armenian language in the Diaspora. Also, to this end, we shall accord particular importance to the effective ratification by the Republic of Armenia of the dual nationality law for the Diaspora.

Adopted on the 19th of October, 2004, at Brussels