



## **TURKISH – ARMENIAN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

### **1997 – April 2007 - Activities and Projects**

The Turkish - Armenian Business Development Council (**TABDC**), co-established on **3 May 1997 in Istanbul and in Yerevan**, is the first and only official link between the public and private sectors in each of the two countries' communities. The TABDC is co-chaired by Arsen Ghazarian and Kaan Soyak.

The aim of the TABDC is to further promote and facilitate close cooperation between the Armenian and Turkish business circles, to help Armenian and Turkish companies streamline their operations and their lines of communications. The TABDC is working to establish direct trade and business links in various sectors, to maintain close ties between the governments of Armenia and Turkey to enable them to forge global economic policies.

The Turkish - Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC), the only link between the Armenian and Turkish public and private sectors, is an intermediary vehicle to further promote close cooperation. The TABDC is the only Turkish Armenian joint institution in the world.

Our efficiency depends on the support given to us by Armenia, Turkey and the Diaspora. Our success is a matter of confidence: the joint endeavor associating Armenia, Turkey and the Diaspora enables us to achieve our aims. Among our wide-ranging activities, let's quote, business trips to Armenia and Turkey, cultural and academic exchange programs between the both countries, lobbying activities in favor of the opening of the Turkish Armenian border, the end of the economic embargo on Armenia , promoting Cross Border Relations and the normalization of political relations, and the preparation of regional business conferences in Anatolia with the participation of businessmen from Armenia and Diaspora.

In this process, we hope to assist in finding peaceful means to approach the historical problems. Our aim is, by contributing to the development of both Anatolia and Armenia, to raise awareness of the diversity of Anatolia, and to help to acknowledge about the existence of an Armenian past in Anatolia, and to send positive messages to Armenia, Turkey and to the Diaspora.

## **Activities & Projects**

1) Joint Meetings of Armenian and Turkish Commissions within TABDC. The first contacts between Turkish and Armenian Business circles have been done, in 1997-1998

Signed protocols can be found on our website .

During visits of both delegations to respective countries, both groups had been accepted by Business Associates and Government Officials .

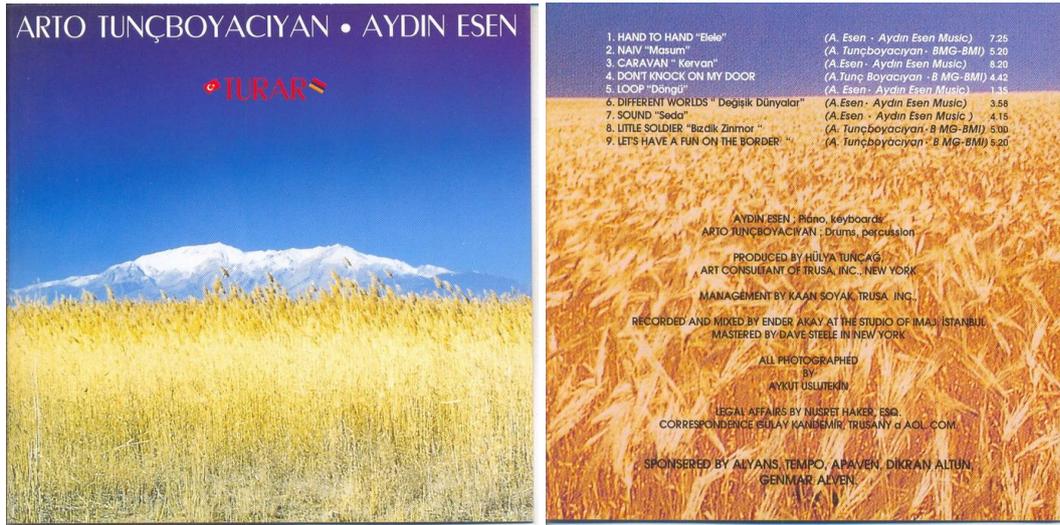
2) TABDC had initiated the first contact on Restoration of Akhtamar Church in Van, having the purpose of protecting Common Cultural Heritage. An Agreement Protocol had been Signed by Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and Union of Architects of Armenia on February, 6 1998

Signed protocol can be found on our website .

3) TABDC had also initiated the first contacts between Universities of Armenia and Turkey. Middle East Technical University which is one of the Leading Institutions of Turkey and Yerevan State University signed a Memorandum of Agreement on February 17 1999 in Ankara.

This MOA has a very significant importance for both countries as both Universities are State Universities signing the MOA.

4) TABDC had initiated and coordinated the First Joint Music Album between Turkish and Armenian Musicians in 1999 The famous musicians Aydin Esen and Arto Tunc Boyaciyan composed 9 songs for the Album called TURAR.



5) Between 1999-2001 TABDC realized following Cultural Exchange events ;

- Concerts by Armenian Duduk musicians are performed in Istanbul and receive praise from audiences.
- A concert by Ohannes Chechichian and his Gregorian Choir was given in Istanbul.
- A show by Chanchurian and Armenian Folk Dance was organized in Istanbul.
- Jivan Gasparian attended Istanbul Music festival and recorded CD with Turkish musician Erkan Ogur.

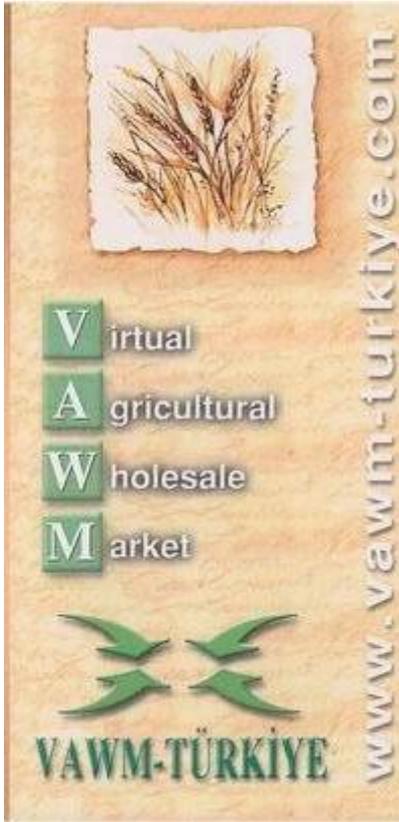
6) In May 1st 2001, US Turkish Armenian Business Council ( USTABC) was established in New York NY, in accordance with 501(c)(6) - Business leagues, chambers of commerce, real estate boards, etc. formed to improve conditions. USTABC has been constantly in relation with Armenian Diaspora in US, and US Officials as well as Turkish Officials for promoting and facilitating close cooperation between the Armenia and Turkey .

7) **Virtual Agricultural Wholesale Market ( VAWM )** ( December 1 2001 – November 31 2002 ) .

This project was the first step towards Cross Border trade between Turkey and Armenia and in long term South Caucasia. Turkish-Armenian Business Council (TABDC) and International Center for Human Development (ICHD) organized the Regional Agricultural Wholesale Market. The product web based site promoting information exchange and commercial cooperation. Project has been realized with Armenian and Turkish regions and after that it was aimed to broaden the project to include other countries in the region. Our target regions are; Shirak, Tavush and Lory from Armenia,

Kars and Erzurum from Turkey. Collected information include market surveys, product kinds, harvest forecasts, cultivation methods, seed, chemical, fertilizer sources and farm equipments.

Our goal in this project was to identify regional partners to gather, to identify their needs and update information. The Project has been financed by Center for Global Peace – American University, within the Track II Public Diplomacy Programme.



#### **8) Ankara String Quartet Concerts in Yerevan ( February 12-19 , 2001 )**

Ankara String Quartet was the first ever Turkish Music Group visited Republic of Armenia. Their Concerts in Yerevan have been included in the Official Activities of " Christian Armenia 1700 Years "



9) Women's Partnerships :On March 8 2002 TABDC together with American University Center for Global Peace A delegation of eight Turkish women traveled to Yerevan to celebrate International Women's Day with their Armenian counterparts. The Turkish delegation included journalists, academics, business women and NGO members. The purpose of the visit was to foster contact and develop practical areas for cooperation among women from Armenia and Turkey. In Yerevan, meetings were held with women parliamentarians, business leaders and academics. A panel discussion was convened at Yerevan State University.

#### 10 ) Komitas Quartet Concerts in Istanbul – Antalya May 4/5 2002

As the continuation of the Cultural Exchange programs, Komitas quartet had 2 Concerts In Turkey being in Istanbul ( May 04, 2002 ) and in Antalya ( May 5 2002 )  
The Quartet and visiting Group consisted of ;

**Komitas Quartet:** Eduard Tadevosyan, Souren Hakhnazaryan, Aleaxander Kosemyan, Aram Talalyan.

**Komitas Quartet Manager/ N.A.B. Arts:** Veronika Padaryan  
**Film Director:** Tigran Xmalian  
**Assistant to Film Director:** Arik Harutyunyan  
**Interpreter:** Ashot Soghomyon

**TÜRK - ERMENİ  
İŞ GELİŞTİRME KONSEYİ**

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**İSTANBUL**  
YER: Fransız Enstitüsü Konser Salonu  
TARİH: 04 Mayıs 2002 Cumartesi  
SAAT: 20.00

**ANTALYA**  
YER: Akdeniz Üniversitesi Atatürk Konferans Salonu  
TARİH: 05 Mayıs 2002 Pazar  
SAAT: 19.00

**İSTANBUL PROGRAMI**  
Edward Mirzoyan (1921) - Quartet  
Ara  
Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828) - Quartet "Rosemunde" La Minor No.13  
Komitas (1869 - 1935) - Minyatürler

**ANTALYA PROGRAMI**  
Reinhold Gilere (1876 - 1956) - İki Violonsel İçin Duetler  
Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828) - Quartet "Rosemunde" La Minor No.13  
Komitas (1869 - 1935) Minyatürler

**MÜZİSYENLER**  
EDOUARD TADVOŞYAN (1. Keman)  
SOUREN HAKHNAZARYAN (2. Keman)  
ALEXANDER KOSEMYAN (Viola)  
ARAM TALALYAN (Violonsel)

**KOMİTAS DÖRTLÜSÜ  
KOMİTAS QUARTET**



## 11) Pilgrimage Tour in Turkey June 4-18 2001

TABDC in Cooperation with "Diocese of the Armenian Church of America Had Organized a Pilgrimage Tour for Diaspora Armenians in United States.

150 Prominent Members of the Armenian Diaspora in the United States visited Turkey For the first time with an Organized Tour by the "Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and TABDC.

The Tour was consisted of 4 different Routes and Groups . All Group has been gathered At 3 points ; Istanbul , Kayseri ( For a Special Service in Krikor Lusavorich Church) And Kars for the Flight to Yerevan. It is important to mention here that a Chartered Passenger flight was arranged from Kars Airport to Yerevan for the first and the last Time during this event with a special permission initiated by TABDC.

### Below a coverage of the Event by Associated Press

#### Armenians Make Pilgrimage to Turkey

KAYSERI, Turkey (AP) — Some 150 Armenian-Americans joined their brethren in Turkey on Friday for a religious service to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the founding of the Armenian church in a city where Christianity is scarcely practiced.

Less than a dozen Armenians now live in the central Turkish city of Kayseri, where St. Gregory the Illuminator — founder of the Armenian church — was baptized in the church that still bears his name. It now holds just two or three services a year.

Inside, purple-robed priests wafted incense above the chanting of some 300 worshippers celebrating the anniversary of their faith.

For many of the Armenian-Americans the trip to Turkey was a personal voyage of discovery — a chance to see the towns and villages their parents or grandparents were forced to flee as violence shook the Ottoman Empire early last century.

Armenians say 1.5 million of their people died in mass killings during World War I that amounted to genocide. Turkey strongly denies the label, arguing that the numbers are inflated and the Armenians were killed during civil unrest.

For generations, this dispute has poisoned Turkey's relations with neighboring Armenia — and with countries, like France and the United States, where Armenian diaspora communities have pushed for official recognition of what they say was genocide.

``Those events broke a friendship that had stretched back for centuries," said Hajak Barsamyan, the head of the Armenian church in New York City, who presided over the service alongside Turkey's Armenian Patriarch Mesrob II. ``But anything that's broken can be repaired."

``There's an affinity between Armenians and Turks, it's more than geographical," said Noubor E. Kazarian, a stockbroker from New York City.

Like many others, Kazarian said he had come ``to see the Turkey where my father and mother grew up."

A two-week tour of central and eastern Turkey, organized by the Turkish-Armenian Business Council and the Armenian church in the United States, will take the group through some of the cradles of Armenian culture.

Kebor Toroyan, an academic from New Canaan, Conn. and the group's chair, is looking forward to visiting the southern city of Adana — his grandfather's old home.

``When I was growing up in the United States, my grandfather said to me, over and over, 'You should see the size of the peaches in Adana'," he said with a smile.

Armenians still living in Turkey — there are some 65,000, though most live in Istanbul and few remain in the former heartland of the east — welcomed their trans-Atlantic brethren.

``Let them come and see — it's the birthplace of Armenian culture," said Bogos Yilan, a furrier from Istanbul. ``This year, 150 came. Next year, 2,000 will come."

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**News Source:** [The Associated Press, Fri 8 Jun 2001](#)



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**ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE \* ERMENİ PATRIKLİĞİ**

August 31st, 2000

To all the faithful of the Holy Apostolic Armenian Church throughout the world from our Patriarchal See of Istanbul: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Bi-Millennial Jubilee of the Birth of our Lord has truly been an invitation to deepen our knowledge of the mystery of God, Who is the Sovereign of history, and the mystery of Jesus Christ, Who entered into history. We also have had the chance to contemplate the spreading of the Gospel amongst the peoples of the Roman Empire during the First Century A.D. by the group of Apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And now, as the year 2001 draws near, we Armenians, responding to the encyclicals of Catholicos Vazgen I and Catholicos Karekin I, both of beloved memory, are preparing ourselves for the 1700th Anniversary of the recognition of the Armenian Apostolic Church by the Arsacid King Tiridates III, traditionally in the year 301 A.D., following the tireless efforts of Saint Gregory the Enlightener.

Therefore the year 2001 is an exceptional year of conversion and of grace for all Armenians. Precisely for this reason, we hereby extend our personal invitation to all who would like to follow us in a special jubilee pilgrimage from Istanbul to Ceasarea Cappadocia (Gesarya, Kayseri) where Saint Gregory grew, studied, formed his family and was ordained bishop, and finally on to Holy Etchmiadzin where he saw his vision. This pilgrimage, in the footsteps of the Holy Apostles and Saint Gregory the Enlightener, will culminate with a solemn Divine Liturgy presided over by His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II of All Armenians.

From June 4 to June 18, 2001, we invite you to embark on a double journey with us: a return to the origins of Armenian Christianity on the paths of the lands of the Apostles and of our beloved father in the Lord Saint Gregory, and also a commitment to the future of our spiritual lives at the very beginning of the Third Millennium. We must all remember that the 1700th Anniversary is not just a ceremonial occasion. It is an unprecedented and unrepeatable time of grace and calling in each and every one of our lives.

Therefore let us exclaim with the Psalmist. "Happy are the people whose strength is in You, whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way! No good thing will the Lord withhold from those who walk with integrity" (Psalm 84).

I look forward to welcoming you in person at the holy site of the ordination of Saint Gregory the Enlightener in Ceasarea Cappadocia.

Prayerfully yours,

MESROB II  
 Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul

**AN ARMENIAN PILGRIMAGE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR**

**Day 1 – June 4, Mon. – Departure from the United States to Istanbul**

**Day 2 – June 5, Tue. – Istanbul**  
 Receive a friendly welcome at the airport, transfer to hotel. Afternoon is for rest and refreshment. Dinner and overnight stay.

**Day 3 – June 6, Wed. – Istanbul**  
 Visit and tour the Armenian Patriarchate. Sightseeing boat tour on the Bosphorus, visit St. Sophia and the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul. Dinner and overnight stay in Istanbul.

**Day 4 – June 7, Thu. – Istanbul / Cappadocia**  
 Transfer to airport for flight to Ceasarea/Kayseri. Transfer to the region of Cappadocia. Lunch is at a regional restaurant. Dinner and overnight in Cappadocia.

**Select one of four different programs being offered between day 5 (June 8) Friday and day 10 (June 13) Wednesday (see next page)**

**Day 11 – June 14, Thu. – Yerevan**  
 Tour of Yerevan. Lunch, dinner and overnight stay in Yerevan.

**Day 12 – June 15, Fri. – Yerevan**  
 Visit Matenadaran (The Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), Tsitsernakaberd Memorial. After lunch, proceed to Khor Virab. Return to hotel for dinner and overnight.

**Day 13 – June 16, Sat. – Yerevan**  
 Departure to Oshagan to visit the St. Mesrop Mashtots Church. Lunch. Return to Yerevan for dinner and overnight.

**Day 14 – June 17, Sun. – Yerevan**  
 Depart for Etchmiadzin where the group will participate in the ceremony. Lunch and free time to follow. Dinner and Overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 15 – June 18, Mon. – Yerevan / Istanbul & on to the United States**  
 Transfer to airport for flight Yerevan / Istanbul / USA

Program subject to change in segment of days and adjustments without notice.

[www.pachatours.com/pilgrimage/](http://www.pachatours.com/pilgrimage/) 1.888.722.4280



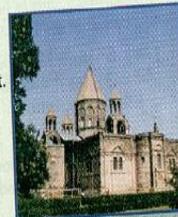
Cappadocia



Istanbul



Khor Virab



Etchmiadzin

## **12) Discovering Common Grounds of Economical Cooperation**

**JUNE 24 , 2002**

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP**

**ARMENIA - AZERBAIJAN - GEORGIA - TURKEY**

A group of 28 Economists and Businessmen from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia & Turkey met in Istanbul over the week-end of June 21-23 .

The group included Academics as well as representatives of Business and NGO sectors.

The meeting was Sponsored by American University- Center For Global Peace and Hosted by Turkish Armenian Business Council ( TABDC) and Istanbul Policy Center (IPC).

During the meeting, the Group considered the current situation of Economic relations among the 4 countries and the possible economical benefits of expanding these relations.

Of particular interest to the Group was the issue of of improving the economic potential of Small and Medium Size Enterprises in the Region.

One proposal for doing so was sharing of information on business conditions and business formation through internet and website. The Group also discussed the importance of supporting current and future infrastructure projects in the Region, and the need for further research on regional economic issues including a very important TRACECA project for linking the region to Europe through all possible TRACECA Routes.

Over all, a number of issues of Common interest were identified and the Group agreed to continue working together on these issues.



### 13 ) Richard Avedis Hagopian with Lalezar Concerts - March 21 – 30 2002

TABDC organized within the Cultural Exchange Programme another Joint Musicians Concert in Istanbul and in Yerevan, The Turkish Classical folk music group Lalezar performed with Armenian American Richard Hagopian, an Ud Player and a world famous musician of traditional Armenian and Turkish Armenian music.

The Concerts were organized to Commemorate the 100th Birthday of Udi Hrant, a Very Famous Armenian Turkish Composer and Instructor of Richard Hagopian

**LALEZAR**

- Reha Sağbaş, kanun • Hasan Esen, kemençe • Murat S. Tokaç, tanbur
- Ahmet Şahin, ney • İbrahim Metin Uğur, viyolonsel • Fahrettin Yarkin, kudüm
- Selma Sağbaş, ses sanatçısı • Doğan Dikmen, ses sanatçısı

**Richard Hagopian, ud**  
**Harold Hagopian, keman - Göksel Kabacı, klarnet**



*Udi Hrant'ın  
100. Yıldönümüne Anısına,  
Richard Hagopian  
ve Lalezar Konseri*

**Yer** : Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Kültür Merkezi  
Albert Long Hall ( Saatli Bina)

**Tarih** : 23 Mart 2002 Cumartesi

**Saat** : 20.00

**Bilgi için** : tabdc@tabdc.org

**Bilet Satış Noktaları**  
Beyaz Adam Kitabevi Cumhuriyet Mah. Saksı Sk. No:19 Pangaltı - İstanbul Tel: (0212) 231 08 55  
Beyaz Adam Kitabevi İstanbul Cad. No: 1 Bakırköy - İstanbul Tel: (0212) 543 95 95

#### **14 ) Marketing Network of Caucasia (MANEC) June 2003 -**

MANEC was conceived at the beginning of the Track Two program as the Virtual Agriculture Wholesale Market (VAWM). The project is implemented locally by The International Centre for Human Development (ICHD) in Armenia and the Turkish Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC) in Turkey. Because a good portion of the Caucasus region relies on subsistence farming for food and income VAWM was seen as a way to give local farmers and ranchers more opportunity for marketing and selling their produce, meat, and other value added products to other areas of the region. Simply, it is believed that by providing other opportunities for trade, new and lasting relationships will be built among the conflicting parties through their common business interests.

Due to Financial reasons since the American University – Center for Global Peace Track II Programme has ended , the Project had to be paused for sometime. We are in Belief that MANEC Project shall endure this pause, and will continue its endeavaour with other Funding Opportunities.

**15) TABDC-EU has been established in Brussels on May 27 2003** with a Press Conference and a round table meeting. The Registration of TABDC-EU is attached .

TABDC-EU is also Co-Chaired by Kaan Soyak and Arsen Ghazaryan, and the Director of the Institution is Mr. Nicolas Tavitian

#### **European Parliament urges the opening of the Turkish-Armenian Border**

Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council is thankful to Per Gahrton, EP rapporteur on the Caucasus and to Joost Lagendijk, chairman of the EP delegation for relations with Turkey , for hosting a conference on April 3, entitled "Still an Iron Curtain: 10 years after the border was closed, April 3, 1993-April 3, 2003" commemorating the date of 10th anniversary of border closure between Armenia and Turkey. The joint initiative of MEP Per Gahrton and Joost Lagendijk, has contributed to extend on the European level the call for the opening for the border between Armenia and Turkey made by TABDC since its co-foundation in Yerevan and Istanbul in 1997.

The two hosts of the conference advocated the need for strenghtening economic and cultural links between Turkey and Armenia as a prelude for the settlement of political disputes. In cases of political conflicts, as quoted by Joost Lagendijk "by-passed roads in European experience, not to forget but try to solve in the end" proves to be the best strategy. Per Garhrtion, by stressing the utmost importance of pragmatism, underlined the "existence of an amount of pragmatism in the region" as showed by the decision to restore the North-South Caucasus railway link and characterized TABDC as one of the example of this pragmatism. Nicolas Tavitian and Burcu Gultekin, co-authors of a report on Armenia-Turkey relations in the 1990's published by the GRIP, a Brussels based think tank, pointed out the costs of the status quo for Armenia and eastern provinces of Turkey and emphasized that the assessment of lost opportunities will contributed to extend the set of possibilities in the region.

Kaan Soyak, co-Chairman of TABDC and the main speaker of the conference expressed his gratitude for the European Commission which in its 2002 Regular Report on Turkey's

Progress towards Accession, praised the activities of TABDC. He reiterated his call for the immediate opening of the border between Turkey and Armenia, which would break the deadlock and facilitate the settlement of political conflicts in the region. Kaan Soyak presented the activities of TABDC in the field of public diplomacy: besides its lobbying activities through all regional institutions and agencies, TABDC has been working for increasing direct interactions by sponsoring numerous trade missions, joint cultural activities, academic cooperation and student exchange programmes and been working on a awareness raising campaign for the restoration of Armenian monuments in Turkey. Kaan Soyak has made a presentation from the perspective of a businessman of the regional impact of a Turkish-Armenian cooperative strategy especially within the TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe/Caucasus/Asia): the use of the existing railway connection between the two countries will integrate the most cost-effective, commercially viable and strategically beneficial East-West corridor to the EC sponsored transport programme.

During the discussions the MEP, Per Gahrton and Lagendijk underscored that the conference was aiming at drawing the attention of the European institutions on the much neglected aspect of Turkish-Armenian relations, the closure of the common border and has no intention to revise EP's official positions expressed in the precedent reports.

The conference was attended by officials from the Embassy of Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well as representatives of NGOs, members of Parliament and diaspora institutions.

## **TABDC – Academic agenda – Past projects**

### **A. Publications**

- Les Relations Arméno-Turques; la Porte Close de l'Orient, by B.Gültekin-N.Tavitian, April, 2003, Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security, Brussels
- The Stakes of the Opening of Turkish-Armenian Border, Cross-Border Relations between Turkey and Armenia, TABDC, Istanbul, August 2003
- “Cross-Border Cooperation Between Turkey and South Caucasus: Prospects for Sub-Regional Integration”, in From War Economies to Peace Economies in the South Caucasus, International Alert (ed), October 2004, London, Saint-Petersburg
- Oil and the Search for Peace in the South Caucasus : the BTC Oil Pipeline, collective policy paper of the International Alert's Business & Conflict BTC Research Project Team, International Alert, December 2004, London
- “Prospects For Regional Cooperation on NATO's South Eastern Border: Developing a Turkish - Russian Cooperation in South Caucasus” , Insight Turkey, Volume 7, No. 4, October-December 2005, Ankara

## **B. Institutional collaboration / Joint initiatives / Establishing new platforms**

### ***International Alert / Economy & Conflict Research Group of the South Caucasus***

- Action oriented research group which led to the publication of the book *From War Economies to Peace Economies in the South Caucasus* explores the ways in which economies and conflict are interlinked. The book is a culmination of work carried out by researchers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, including Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia. The overriding message from the authors is that understanding these links is essential if there is to be a successful process of long-term peacebuilding in the region, moving beyond the current stasis of frozen conflicts and helping to de-escalate those that have slipped into violence.
- Organization of the Istanbul conference (October 2004, Launch of the book) and Trabzon meeting (December, 2004, Caucasian and Turkish SME meeting)
- Establishment of the Caucasus Business Development Network (CBDN, caucasusbusiness.net )

### ***NATO - Public Diplomacy Division***

- Preparation of the NATO, Manfred Wörner Fellowship Report, 2004-2005 “Prospects for Regional Cooperation on NATO’s South-Eastern Border, Developing a Turkish-Russian Cooperation in South Caucasus”
- Presentation of the findings at a seminar held at NATO HQ in Brussels for the International Political Secretariat and the National Delegations (October, 2005)
- Presentation of the findings in the region, at the conference ““Between the Caspian and Black Seas: New Challenges and Opportunities for the South Caucasus”, organized by Spectrum in Yerevan (October, 2005)

### ***European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) / The municipality of Kars : The Kars-Akhalkalaki Initiative : Integrating and Opening Up Samtskhe-Javakheti***

TABDC is actively supporting the local initiative undertaken by political officials and business communities of Kars and Akhalkalaki aiming at bridging two bordering regions.

1-3 June businessmen and political leaders from the city of Kars in Eastern Turkey and Akhaltsike, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Georgia) met to discuss how to improve the economic relations between the border regions of Georgia and Turkey. During the two-day visit the delegation from Samtskhe-Javakheti met with the Mayor of Kars Mr. Naif Alibeyoglu , the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kars, Mr. Ali Guvensoy and private Turkish businessmen. The program also included excursions to the industrial area of Kars and the ancient town of Ani.

Detailed Press Release can be found in <http://www.tabdc.org/pdf/K-A-english.pdf?id=324>

### ***European Parliament***

On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border, on April, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003, businessman Kaan Soyak, Burcu Gültekin and Nicolas Tavitian addressed the prospects for cross-border cooperation between Turkey and Armenia at a conference at the European Parliament. The conference entitled “Still an Iron Curtain: Armenia-Turkey relations, 10 years after the border was closed” was chaired by MEP Per Gahrton, rapporteur on the Caucasus and MEP Joost Lagendijk, Chairman of the EP delegation for relations with the Turkey.

### ***TABDC Initiated and Co-organized; ROTARY & CAUCASIAN FRIENDSHIP DAYS March 18-20, 2005***

Rotary Club members from Yerevan and Gyumri (Armenia), Baku (Azerbaijan), Tbilisi (Georgia), California (District 5230 and 5300), New York (the Host Club of America and the United Nations) and District 2430 (Turkey) participated in the CAUCASIAN FRIENDSHIP DAYS. The event was held March 18-20, 2005 at the Bilkent Hotel in Ankara under the Chairmanship of District Governor Erhan Çiftçioğlu and co-moderated, co-chaired by the [Rotary Club of New York](http://www.rotary.org).

*All Information regarding the Caucasian Friendship Days can be obtained from the following link <http://www.tabdc.org/rotary.php>*

### **WILTON PARK CONFERENCE ( 6-10 NOVEMBER 2006 )**

Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC) Europe Coordinator Dr. Burcu Gültekin, took part in the Wilton Park conference “South Caucasus: Perceptions and Challenges of the Region” organized on November, 6-10<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 in Yerevan. (*link to the agenda*)

Dr Gültekin made a presentation titled “The Normalization of Turkish-Armenian Relations: Challenge for Regional Integration and Sustainable Peace” in a session dedicated the integration of the wider region

### **Cultural Heritage Across borders Workshop ( Feb. 9-10<sup>th</sup> 2007 ) Istanbul**

- Assisted in organization and participated to Cultural Heritage Across Borders Workshop , in Istanbul Feb 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> 2007. Organized by Global Heritage Fund ( GHF) and Hosted by BSEC .
- ***Attached the presentation of TABDC in this Conference.***

## • **Caucasus Business & Development Network – Turkey Project (CBDN) in cooperation with International Alert, Economy & Conflict Project**

- Since May, 2003, TABDC has been participating in the The Economy and Conflict Research Group of the South Caucasus (ECRG) : a group of researchers from Tbilisi, Sukhum/i, Tskhinval/i, Yerevan, Stepanakert/Khankendi, Baku and Istanbul/Ankara that seeks to examine the nature of economies in the region with a view to exploring economy-related peacebuilding opportunities. Publication of the book “From War Economies to Peace Economies in the South Caucasus”.
- The ECRG launched in August 2006 the Caucasus Business & Development Network (CBDN) Project which will lay the foundations for a community of business people engaging in cross-conflict dialogue and economic cooperation. TABDC is implementing the Turkish part of the project
- Organized a CBDN Business Forum meeting in Kars between March 23-25 , 2007 with the participants from Armenia , Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey , aiming at the cross-border business contact at micro level and funded by the UK Embassies in both Ankara and Yerevan. Among the participants, there were producers of regional common products of Honey, Cheese from all the respected countries discussing cooperation, joint business and trade possibilities. UNDP Turkey and Armenia were also participated in the event.

## • **Support to Armenia-Turkey Rapprochement ( SATR) Project.**

Since October 2010 TABDC partnered with Armenian Think Tanks and NGO’s acting within SATR Project, developing business ties between 2 countries.

In 2011 January until May UMBA and TABDC completed the survey both in Turkey and Armenia and produced the first draft of the Business Opinion Leaders’ Research. It is expected that business communities in Armenia and Turkey, as well as other local and international stakeholders, will be able to use the research results to strategically plan their cooperation.

Turkish Armenian Business Development Council ( TABDC and Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA) helped to establish the Association of Armenian and Turkish Travel Companies (AATTC) aiming to develop regional tourism through elaboration of joint tour packages and joint participation in tourism fairs and exhibitions. While not formally registered in either Armenia or Turkey, the Association is open for new travel companies willing to join.

An English- and Armenian-language study report titled “Armenian-Turkish Business Relations through the Eyes of Business Opinion Leader” was produced by joint efforts of UMBA, Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC), and EPF.

In September 2011, as part of the visit of SATR project partners to Ankara [led by International Center for Human Development (ICHD)], UMBA, TABDC and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) established a policy level partnership, which will make it possible for UMBA, TABDC, and TEPAV to work together to increase the number of transit entries and explore the possibility of granting Armenian trucks permission to enter Turkey both for transit purposes and upload and download of goods in Turkey.

UMBA’s and TABDC’s joint efforts played an important role in encouraging the Turkish government

to extend the expiry of the 200 pilot entry permits enabling 200 Armenian transit trucks cross the territory of Turkey until January 31, 2012. This achievement became possible in the

framework of the Pilot Project on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Permit. The Association of International Road Carriers of Armenia started using BSEC entry permits for transit of Armenian trucks via Turkey, and in November 2011 two Armenian trucks passed Turkey as transit from port Samsun and crossed the point of Sarpi at the Turkey-Georgia border.

On November 22-23, 2011, UMBA & TABDC organized a business conference in Yerevan, which was followed by business-to-business meetings. Thirty Turkish businesspeople representing light industry, construction, furniture production, mining industry, jewelry and trade participated in the conference.

ICHD, GAYA, UMBA and TABDC conducted research on transport and freight forwarding between Armenia and Turkey and produced a report entitled "*Perspectives for Development of Transport and International Corridors in Armenia, Turkey and the Region*". The report addresses road, railroad and multimodal transportation issues relevant for stakeholders (governments, business and expert community) in Armenia and Turkey, and promotes informed decision-making on business development across the border.

TABDC is exploring opportunities for connecting the Armenian Internet network to the Turkish network, which would provide Armenia with faster and more cost-effective Internet. Currently, TABDC is analyzing the sector via meetings with the IT industry stakeholders in both countries. One of the goals is to conduct a feasibility study in the area. It is anticipated that Armenia will significantly benefit from connecting the two national Internet networks. TABDC will continue looking into this sector and reaching out to stakeholders to collect comprehensive information about the sector and to reach a deal between Armenia and Turkey.

- UMBA and TABDC engaged in preparatory work for the upcoming Armenia-Turkey business conference to be held in Kars, Turkey, on June 15-16, 2012. UMBA and TABDC will invite around 60 businessmen representing different cities and business fields in Armenia and Turkey including light industry, construction, furniture production, mining, jewelry and trade. Conference speakers will present the current state of affairs and the prospects for Armenia-Turkey business cooperation. Participants will be able to discuss opportunities for business cooperation with their counterparts from the other country, and visit some of the businesses located in the Kars region.