

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF  
ARMENIA TIGRAN SARGSYAN AT THE EUROPEAN  
PEOPLE'S PARTY SUMMER UNIVERSITY  
(BUCHAREST, 22-24 SEPTEMBER 2011)**

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this Meeting of the European People's Party. I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the invitation to speak at this very important gathering.

Today, I have the honor of representing not only the Armenian Government, but also the Armenian Republican Party. So, I would like to take this opportunity to deliver the warmest greetings of the President of

Armenia and of my fellow party members.

Today, we are witnessing dramatic changes in North Africa and the Middle East. In the context of the Arab Spring, we are hearing calls for change. These calls for change have a common aspiration: they all strive towards the establishment of democratic values.

Twenty years ago, not far from the Arab world, calls for change and democracy were being made at the onset of the Soviet collapse, in Armenia. Our post-independence era has been marked by a movement toward democratic ideals. Today in my

country, we cannot imagine our lives without political diversity, debate, economic freedom, civil liberties, and respect for human rights.

Of course, along the way, we have encountered difficulties. While we are proud of many great achievements, there have also been some serious deviations from the course. We are still facing great challenges, yet we have never questioned our adherence to basic European values. We have never doubted the road we have chosen. Our determination to establish deep political and economic integration with the European Union has never faltered.

The Republican Party of Armenia is currently the leading political force in our country. We have vast political experience and a vibrant history dating back to Soviet era dissident movements. Our political doctrine stems from the ideas of constitutional liberalism as well as the traditional values of the Armenian people and the Armenian Apostolic Church. In particular, we are committed to such universal principles as liberty, equality, justice, solidarity, democracy, and human rights.

As a right-wing political organization, the Republican Party of

Armenia has applied for observer membership to the European People's Party. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our determination to become a member of the European People's Party. We are committed to cooperation and dialogue with you because we share common political aspirations and objectives.

I am confident that through close communication with likeminded political forces in Europe, we will be able to expand upon our experience and enrich our ideological basis. I also believe that our membership to the European People's Party will strongly

facilitate our cooperation and integration with the EU – a policy that is completely in line with the priorities of our Government.

The European Union plays an important role in sustaining peace and stability in the South Caucasus. It is in a unique position to affect positive change in our region for two key reasons:

Firstly, the EU has vast experience and resources that can be used to promote reform in our countries. The Eastern Partnership, the EU's main interface with our region, is structured

to facilitate tangible, large-scale reform in almost every sphere of life.

Secondly, with its very foundation based on overcoming differences through dialogue, cooperation, and compromise, the European Union is in a unique position to promote the same constructive model in our region. This is perhaps the most significant impact, because trust, tolerance, and communication are the keys to successful regional cooperation.

Thank you.