



# INTERIM EXTRAORDINARY REPORT

## Coverage of the suggestion to terminate membership of Armenia in the EEU by Public Television

On September 8, during the session of the RA NA Yelq fraction the decision was made to submit a draft NA statement "On start of the process of terminating the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty in the Republic of Armenia" as a legislative initiative. Monitoring of Armenian media from the time decision was made until September 18 shows that the draft decision on termination of EEU treaty has been thoroughly discussed by online media and has become one of the primary issues in domestic politics. Nevertheless, results of the media monitoring conducted by the Union of Informed Citizens show that the issue was not properly covered or was moderately covered, exclusively one-sidedly, during the broadcasts of the "Agenda" news program on Public Television.

### Comments

*On September 8*, though there was no reference to the suggestion of Yelq party on exit from EEU, however during the «Agenda» evening news broadcast at 21:00 there was a report about regular session of the supreme body of the RPA. During the session the RA NA vice chairmen Eduard Sharmazanov summed up the meeting between RF president Vladimir Putin and RA president Serzh Sargsyan in Sochi, noting that *"at this stage strategic and allied relations between RA and RF dynamically develop in all directions"*. In parallel with his statement editorial staff of the Agenda news program of Public Television placed the following phrases in the footnote:

«Relations between RA and RF develop, Yelq alliance submitted to NA a draft decision on exit from EEU».

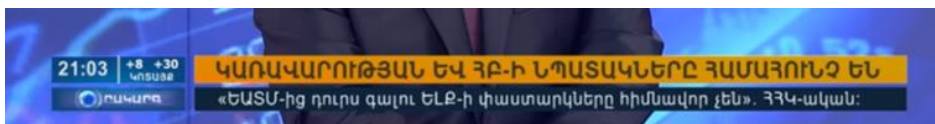
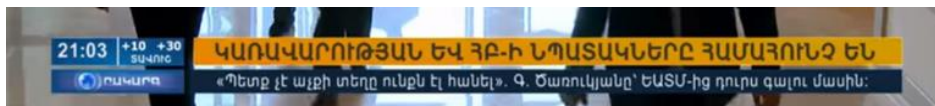


Which was immediately followed by the following footnote: «Relations between RA and RF develop, «Armenian foreign policy directions need no revision» Sharmazanov».



*On September 10*, in the broadcast of "Agenda" program at 21:00 EEU was only slightly mentioned by Arsen Minasyan, Head of Ararat Group Quality Control Department, when he talked about their new product, praising new EEU technical regulation.

*On September 11*, the main broadcast of Agenda program at 21:00, without any verbal coverage, one-sidedly interpreted the draft decision on termination of membership to EEU.



In fact, during the September 11 broadcast "Agenda" referred to RPA representative Eduard Sharmazanov, then mentioned words of the Republican Party representative and Tsarukyan bloc leader Gagik Tsarukyan on exit from EEU. All three sentences had exclusively negative tone, and the multilateral coverage of the issue was missing.

*On September 12*, during the main broadcast at 21:00 Agenda program, finally referring to the issue, mentioned: "Membership of Armenia to EEU and CSTO not only needs no revision but also has

a tendency for expansion" vice-speaker Eduard Sharmazanov stated in the National Assembly today. He noted that the issue of security would continue to be the most important issue of our country's agenda. "Once again we state that the priorities of Armenia's foreign policy, namely the Armenian-Russian allied relations, Armenia's membership to the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union, not only need no revision, but also have expansion tendencies."

*On September 13*, discussions of the Yelq draft decision on exit from the EEU in the National Assembly were finally covered, but again one-sidedly, during the broadcast of "Agenda" at 21:00. Moreover, at the beginning of the report hostess of "Agenda" mentions: "Yelq keeps EEU issue as a hot topic. Mane Tandilian asks why we are there". Then "Agenda" shows the speech by prime minister Karen Karapetyan, in which he mentions: "Is there a product today that we are ready to export to other markets, but we do not just because we are a member of the EEU?" Then Karen Karapetyan noted that the percentage of growth of Armenia's export to EU is higher than that to EEU.

*On September 17* during the summarizing Sunday broadcast of "Agenda" at 21:00 there was another reference to EEU, again with obvious praise. The hostess noted that the demand for Armenian beverages and food had increased in the EEU market and this was also confirmed by an export investment insurance agency. It is noteworthy that this part of the broadcast referred to the new political mechanisms of generally exported goods and their state insurance, but only exports to EEU and Russia were brought as examples.

*On September 9, 14, 15 and 16* "Agenda" program of Public Television did not address the issue at all.

### **Conclusions**

In fact, there is no balanced and comprehensive coverage of the issue in the "Agenda" broadcasts. There is no argument to the motives for leaving EEU or voting for it. On the "Agenda", coverage of views of the ruling party and political forces, who consider that there is no alternative to EEU, prevails. Monitoring makes it possible to state that on the Public Television broadcasts there is an obvious sympathy towards EEU, excluding any alternative.

*Union of Informed Citizens*

*18.09.2017, Yerevan*