

**ARMENIA INDIVIDUAL PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN
ASSESSMENT SPRING 2013**

Executive Summary

1. Armenia is an active Partner of the Alliance in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP). This is the seventh assessment of progress made by Armenia in the implementation of its IPAP. It is based on the current IPAP, agreed by NATO and Armenia in November 2011.
2. Armenia conducted parliamentary elections in May 2012 and Presidential elections in February 2013. The 2012 parliamentary elections were an important step as it brought the opposition back to Parliament and set the stage for a more vibrant debate between and Government and opposition within the National Assembly. The presidential elections in February 2013 were marked by the absence of candidates from the major opposition parties. International observers concluded that the presidential elections on 18 February were generally well administered and were characterized by a respect for fundamental freedoms, however they also noted a lack of impartiality of the public administration, misuse of administrative resources, and cases of pressure on voters. The international observers also expressed substantial concerns about the post-election process.
3. During the second half of 2012, Armenia adopted a new strategy for legal and judicial reforms for the 2012-2016 period, as well as a new human rights strategy. Further substantial progress towards a truly independent judiciary continues to be a key challenge. Other priority areas should be enhancing pluralism among TV broadcasters and the development of a new anti-corruption strategy. Armenia has stepped up its participation in NATO's Building Integrity initiative.
4. The parliamentary committee on Defence, National Security and Internal Affairs continues to play a relatively modest role in overseeing the Ministry of Defence. Further concrete steps to develop structural relations between the MOD and Parliament should be considered, as well as additional measures to enhance the MOD's transparency. The treatment of military conscripts and high numbers of non-combat casualties remains of significant concern and should be addressed comprehensively.
5. Armenia has continued to participate in negotiations mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group. The number of direct meetings between Armenian and Azerbaijani officials decreased. Efforts to define a mechanism to investigate cease-fire violations have largely been unsuccessful. The development of humanitarian contacts as part of the confidence-building measures has been very limited. Small arms cease-fire violations along the Line of Contact continue to be frequent and underscore the need for increased efforts by the sides to bridge the remaining differences on the basic principles for a peaceful settlement. The Safarov case had a negative effect on relations between the two countries. The sides should refrain from actions and statements likely to inflame tensions, including implicit and explicit threats of military action.

6. No additional progress has been achieved in the bilateral dialogue with Turkey, further to the bilateral documents signed in October 2009 on establishing diplomatic relations and on bilateral relations. At the same time, civil society contacts and (indirect) trade continue to develop.

7. A new National Strategy to combat Terrorism in the Republic of Armenia was approved in April 2012, and the Government adopted in November 2012 a programme-timetable for its implementation. Armenia is keen to compare with Allies and Partners best practice in the area of defence against terrorism as well as cyber security.

8. Armenia is an active and steady contributor to NATO-led operations. Armenia maintained its contribution to ISAF in 2012. Armenia currently has 126 personnel deployed in two locations (Kunduz and Mazar-i-Sharif) in Afghanistan; five of these personnel are infantry trainers. Armenia also resumed its participation in KFOR with currently one platoon, but it has offered to expand this to a company by summer 2013. Armenia has also been recognized as a potential operational partner for the post-2014 mission in Afghanistan.

9. Armenia's defence plans, most of which are reflected in the NATO – Armenia IPAP, continue to put priority on protecting its independence and sovereignty by the provision of a military force capable of dealing with possible threats. The Strategic Defence Review identified priorities which resulted in a series of transformation objectives. These can be grouped in two main categories, reduction of personnel levels and improvement of the combat effectiveness of the armed forces. The number of professional soldiers is being increased gradually and it is aimed to have a fully professional NCO corps to reduce dependency on conscription and improve the combat readiness of the armed forces. Other activities supporting these transformation objectives include a higher level of manning of the 12th Peacekeeping Brigade, improve combat service support, improve abilities to face asymmetric threats and further develop national industrial capabilities. Other national plans are to further enhance the democratic control of the armed forces and put in place a more effective defence planning and budgeting system in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and to introduce auditing and improved accounting processes. Armenia has also prepared one infantry brigade to be able to sustain up to one battalion for CSTO operations as part of the rapid reaction force of the CSTO.

10. The State Border Troops pursued the implementation of a new Border Security and Integrated State Border Management Strategy approved in 2010 using an Action Plan on Implementation of the Strategy on Border Security and State Border Integrated Management of the Republic of Armenia (2011-2015) approved in 2011. Armenia is supported by European Union (EU) advice and funding while EU funding to implement the South Caucasus Integrated Border Management Project, aimed at improving border security at the Georgian border, is managed by the United Nations Development Programme. Armenia is also cooperating with the Russian Federation in border security.

11. Over the course of 2012, Armenia continued its efforts to publicize the NATO-Armenia partnership, in particular through the annual NATO Week. The NATO Information Centre in Yerevan also continued to support efforts to raise awareness about NATO and NATO-Armenia relations. Public awareness was also raised through a number of NGO initiatives co-sponsored by NATO PDD.

12. Armenia has continued to make progress in the area of civil emergency planning, but important structural challenges, including underfunding, remain. As many SPS funded projects involving Armenia were completed over the past year, the overall number of current projects with Armenia has dropped.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This is the seventh assessment of progress made by Armenia in the implementation of its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. It is based on NATO-Armenia IPAP agreed on 4 November 2011 (PO(2011)0474).
2. This document, the second assessment of the progress achieved by Armenia in the implementation of its current IPAP, evaluates progress on the basis of the jointly agreed IPAP objectives and timelines. The assessment was developed following discussions held by an IS team from 25 February to 1 March 2013, and the IPAP self-assessment provided by Armenia. The assessment also builds substantially on the report on the PARP Partnership Goals for Armenia for 2013 (EAPC(C)D(2013)0006), approved in April 2013.

PARTICIPATION IN PFP AND NATO-LED OPERATIONS

3. Armenia is an **active Partner** of the Alliance in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Armenia joined the PfP in 1994 and began participating in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 2002. Armenia agreed its first IPAP with NATO in December 2005, a second in May 2009 and the third in November 2011. During 2012, Armenia co-organized a seminar with the NATO International Staff on "Enhancing Cooperative Security", it hosted the Defence Educators Work Shop, and it sent a rescue unit to participate in the EADRCC exercise in Georgia. In December 2012, Armenia requested assistance to launch a new NATO Trust Fund project aimed at disposing of certain CFE Treaty Limited Equipment and supporting Armenia's efforts in humanitarian demining. More recently, it announced its intention to fully engage in the Building Integrity Initiative. Armenia plans to participate in some 130 activities in 2013¹.

4. Armenia is an active and steady **contributor to NATO-led operations**. Armenia has been contributing to KFOR since 2004. Armenia resumed its military contribution to KFOR in July 2012 following a six month hiatus. Currently, it contributes one platoon to MNB East, but it has offered to expand this to a company by summer 2013. Armenia has contributed troops to ISAF since early 2010. Currently, it provides three light infantry platoons (serving with German forces in Kunduz, Regional Command North), as well as five instructors as a component of a German-Armenian OMLT for the Afghan National Army in Mazar-i-Sharif). In late 2012, the National Assembly of Armenia decided to extend

¹ The full list of selected activities is subject to updates and can be seen in ePRIME <https://prime.hq.nato.int>

the contribution to ISAF until 31 December 2014. Armenia also provides overflight rights and contingency host nation support to Allies for resupply of ISAF. On 8 February 2013, the Council agreed to recognize Armenia as a potential operational partner in the post-2014 Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. In addition, Armenia deployed an officer to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) during 2012, and is exploring increasing its commitment to UN Missions.

CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL AND SECURITY-RELATED ISSUES

Cooperation with European and Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions, and relations with neighbours

5. Armenia has continued to participate in negotiations mediated by the three Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, France, Russia, and the United States, in order to achieve a negotiated settlement for the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs visited the region in March, May, July and November 2012 as well as March 2013. The number of direct meetings between Armenian and Azerbaijani officials decreased, in particular following Azerbaijan's decision in September 2012 to pardon the Azerbaijani army officer Safarov, a decision which Armenia considered to have significantly damaged the entire peace process. The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in June and October 2012, and again in January 2013. They also met separately with the Minsk Group co-chairs on 3 and 4 March in Paris. No meeting at the level of Heads of State has taken place since January 2012. Efforts to define a mechanism to investigate cease-fire violations have largely been unsuccessful. The development of humanitarian contacts as part of the confidence-building measures has been very limited. Small arms cease-fire violations along the Line of Contact continue to be frequent and underscore the volatility of the situation and the need for increased efforts by the sides to bridge the remaining differences on the basic principles for a peaceful settlement. The sides should refrain from actions and statements likely to inflame tensions, including implicit and explicit threats of military action.

6. On 17 May 2013, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group met with the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Krakow. The Co-Chairs reiterated the need to avoid actions or rhetoric that could raise tensions or damage the peace process, and discussed with the Ministers a number of confidence building measures to help create an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation.

7. Armenia maintains good relations with **Russia**, including close ties in the political and economic spheres. For instance, Armenia and Russia's *Rosatom* are part of a joint venture company to construct a new nuclear power plant in Armenia which is to be ready by 2020. At the same time, Armenia remains ambivalent about participation in the Eurasian Union proposed by Russia. Cooperation in the field of security is broad ranging, including through Armenia's membership in the CSTO. In August 2012, Armenia and Russia signed a new set of defence agreements, which focussed to a large degree on defence industrial cooperation. In September 2012, Armenia hosted a key CSTO exercise

on its territory and sent an invitation to the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee to observe the CSTO Annual "VZAIMODEYSTVIE-2012" (INTERACTION-2012) Combined Joint Exercises. The NATO Liaison Officer for the South Caucasus attended VIP day of the exercise.

8. Armenia continues to maintain good relations with **Georgia**, with particular focus on economic, energy, and transportation cooperation. The change in Government in Georgia has led to new momentum in resolving the issue of church properties. The Cooperation in border management is substantial and the existing border crossing points are being reconstructed with EU funding. However, no progress has been made over 2012 towards an agreement on border delimitation (some 65 out of 265 kilometres of border remain to be delimitated), and the mixed commission responsible for the negotiations has not met since September 2011. Following the 2012 parliamentary elections in Georgia, the idea to reopen the railway line through Abkhazia – as a way to improve Armenia's connection to its trading partners - has re-emerged. The volume of direct trade between Armenia and Georgia remains relatively low (less than 3% of Armenia's trade is with Georgia). Georgia and Armenia stepped up defence cooperation during 2012 and this is expected to continue in 2013.

9. Further to the signature in October 2009 by **Armenia and Turkey** of two documents to improve relations (a "Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations" and a "Protocol on the Development of Relations"), ratification of these bilateral documents is pending. Despite the absence of progress towards normalization of relations at the official level over the past year, contacts between civil societies have been enhanced. Indirect trade between the two countries also continues at substantial levels. The Armenia-NATO IPAP restates Armenia's readiness to pursue efforts to normalization of relations with Turkey without preconditions.

10. Armenia has continued to maintain a broad **political dialogue with NATO** over the past year. Following President Sargsyan's meeting with the NATO Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council in March 2012, the NATO Secretary General visited Yerevan on 6 September 2012. Foreign Minister Nalbandyan and Defence Minister Ohanyan have taken part in a number of NAC meetings in ISAF format over the past year. Colonel General Yuri Khachaturov, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia, attended the Military Committee Chiefs of Staff session with partners in January 2013. Meetings with Allies (28+1) in the PARP context took place in March 2012 and April 2013. The NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia Mr. Appathurai paid a visit to Yerevan in November 2012. On 5-6 November, the Foreign Ministry of Armenia co-organized a seminar with the NATO International Staff on "Enhancing Cooperative Security: The Added Value of NATO's new Partnership Policy". Armenia also attended many other meetings in ISAF and EAPC format. Armenia has also proposed two topics as potential discussion items within the EAPC : "the EAPC's role in confidence and security-building" and "protection of Human Rights in Armed Forces". Armenia maintains close contact with the NATO Liaison Officer for the South Caucasus.

11. Armenia's relations with the **European Union** continue to develop in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in place since 1999, and the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. The EU also supports a number of key Ministries with policy, legal, and institutional advice through an EU Advisory Group, whose presence in Yerevan has been extended until 2014. In addition, Armenia receives substantial financial assistance from the European Union (through Macro Financial Assistance and through the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument). A visa facilitation agreement was signed in December 2012. This agreement, together with a readmission agreement (to be signed at a later stage and enter into force simultaneously), will be a first step to creating conditions for secure and well managed mobility, including a visa-free regime in due course. Meanwhile, Armenia has abolished short-stay visas for EU and Schengen zone citizens. Armenia also received an extra 15 million euro in assistance on the basis of the EU's "more for more" policy. Over the past year, the EU also renewed its funding for a consortium of NGOs, led by International Alert, that strives to increase the credibility and popular legitimacy of peace building efforts around the Nagorno Karabakh conflict

12. Armenia has made substantial progress in negotiating an **Association Agreement** with the EU which is to succeed the PCA and includes provisions for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. To date, some 27 out of 28 chapters of the Association Agreement have been provisionally closed. Negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Armenia started in June 2012 and three rounds of discussions have been held since. It might still be possible to complete the negotiations on the Association Agreement by the time of the EU's Eastern Partnership Summit scheduled for November 2013.

13. Within the next year, Armenia also hopes to sign with the EU a "Framework agreement for participation in EU-led mission and operations".

14. Armenia will chair the **Council of Europe** Committee of Ministers starting from May till November 2013. It intends to focus on: the fight against intolerance, development of local democracy, and rule of law. On the basis of the COE Action Plan for Armenia (2012-2014), a number of projects are being implemented. These address as key priority areas: further reforms of the judiciary, reform of the penitentiary, integration of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights into domestic law, media freedom and education of journalists, combating corruption, reforms of the education sector, further reforms and strengthening of local self-government, as well as support for free and fair elections.

Democracy, Rule of Law, Fight Against Corruption and Human Rights

15. Armenia conducted parliamentary elections in May 2012 and Presidential elections in February 2013. The 2012 parliamentary elections were an important step as they brought the opposition back to Parliament and set the stage for a more vibrant debate between and Government and opposition within the National Assembly. The opposition PAP also won the post of mayor in Gyumri. The presidential elections in February 2013 were marked by the absence of candidates from the major opposition parties. President Sargsyan was re-elected with some 58% of the vote. Overall, the recent **electoral cycle** moved the country a long way beyond the situation which followed the March 2008 violence. However, the investigations into these events remain inconclusive. A vote in the Armenian National Assembly on setting up an ad hoc commission to focus on the 2008 political unrest was postponed until after the presidential elections.

16. The **International Election Observation Mission** concluded that the presidential election on 18 February was "generally well administered and was characterized by a respect for fundamental freedoms. Contestants were able to campaign freely. Media fulfilled their legal obligation to provide balanced coverage, and all contestants made use of their free airtime. At the same time, a lack of impartiality of the public administration, misuse of administrative resources, and cases of pressure on voters were of concern. While election day was calm and orderly, it was marked by undue interference in the process, mainly by proxies representing the incumbent, and some serious violations were observed."². Local NGOs also report incidents where the secrecy of the ballot was not respected for military conscripts who were voting. In a further report on 2 March, the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission took a more critical view of the post-election process, and raised concerns regarding the integrity of the electoral process, as the official results show a correlation between very high turnout and the number of votes for the incumbent. The Government is encouraged to work with OSCE/ODIHR to analyze the deficiencies in the electoral process and address decisively long-standing weakness such as the inaccuracies in the voter list.

17. In July, Armenia adopted a new strategy for **legal and judicial reforms** for the 2012-2016 period. The strategy aims to ensure a fair and effective judicial power and takes an integrated approach: addressing the legal framework, organizational structures, training requirements, accessibility of the judicial power, and the promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Taking a cautious approach towards the key issue of enhancing the independence of the judiciary, the strategy does not propose major steps to reduce the extensive powers of the Presidency in judicial appointments and disciplinary measures against judges, and the close ties between judges and prosecutors. A new draft Criminal Procedure Code has been drafted and presented to the Government on 31 July 2012. Further substantial progress towards a truly independent judiciary continues to be a key challenge for Armenia.

² As jointly reported by OSCE ODIHR, OSCE PA, PACE, and EP international election observers in their preliminary conclusions of 19 February 2013.

18. During the past year, the successive electoral campaigns provided a good occasion to assess the freedom and diversity of the **media**. The International Observer Mission recognized that, during the campaigns before the Presidential election, the media fulfilled their legal obligation to provide balanced coverage, however, it also highlighted a tendency by some broadcast media to limit views critical of the conduct of the election during the post-election period. More broadly, Armenia decriminalized libel and insult in 2010. Whilst this initially led to an upsurge in libel cases, the number of such cases diminished during 2012. No concrete progress was made with the review of Armenia's Law on TV and Radio Broadcasting, although the issue was readdressed following the Presidential elections. Further efforts to enhance pluralism among TV broadcasters and enhance the independence of the National Board for Radio and Television will be important. Armenia is encouraged to make best use of the support and advice of the Council of Europe and ODIHR in this area.

19. In May 2011, a new Law on **Freedom of Assembly** entered into force. In contrast with previous years, perceived restrictions to freedom of assembly stopped being a political issue during 2012 and in the run-up to the Presidential elections.

20. Armenia has not yet developed a new plan to succeed the **anti-corruption strategy** for 2009-2012. Notwithstanding some legislative steps, such as amendments to the decree on Procurement Process management, and some high-profile dismissals, momentum is still lacking in addressing the full range of issues creating conditions for relatively high levels of perceived corruption in Armenia. In the TI Corruption Perception Index 2012, Armenia scored 34 (and was ranked 105th) which was a slight improvement from the previous year. Armenia continues to be encouraged to develop a new anti-corruption strategy and a body which will receive a strong mandate to monitor its implementation and to take action if implementation is failing. This will also require mechanisms to involve NGOs active in this area and sufficient secretarial support for a monitoring body. It will also be important to enhance the number of successful prosecutions of high-profile corruption cases.

21. Armenia has made substantial reforms with regard to both themes of **GRECO's Third Round (Incriminations and Transparency of Political Party Funding)**. Armenia submitted a Situation Report on measures taken to implement the nineteen GRECO recommendations received in 2011. GRECO's Third Round Compliance Report for Armenia, publicly available since December 2012, concludes that Armenia has implemented satisfactorily sixteen out of the nineteen recommendations. In October 2012, Armenia also withdrew its reservation to Article 12 of the COE's Criminal Law Convention.

22. Armenia has stepped up its participation in the **Building Integrity initiative**. With support by the OSCE Mission in Yerevan, relevant materials have been translated into Armenian. The Ministry of Defence has indicated it intends to conduct a BI self-assessment in the near future. A NATO BI expert team is to visit and peer review the assessment, and develop recommendations thereafter. Meanwhile, Armenia has stepped its participation in BI training events.

23. The Government continues to pay substantial attention to **human rights** issues. In October 2012, the National Strategy on Human Rights Protection was enacted. The strategy offers *inter alia* targeted solutions for specific human rights problems and identifies vulnerable groups. The strategy does not include specific provisions regarding conscripts or the armed forces in general. A related Action Plan to implement the National Strategy is currently under development. Armenia also continued to participate in the UN Periodic Review and other international mechanisms in the area of human rights in 2012 and had its second annual human rights dialogue with the European Union in December 2012. Deficiencies in the rule of law domain continue to impact Armenia's overall human rights record. Of specific concern continue to be prison conditions, pre-trial detention, ill-treatment during police interrogations, and trial procedures. Armenia may also wish to revisit legislation on implementing its international commitments stemming from the UN convention against torture.

24. Armenia is currently finalizing amendments to its law on **Alternative military Service**, taking into account the recommendation by the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. The current Law does not provide for an alternative "civilian" service (the alternative service is supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Defence). NGOs claim some 30 people were in prison by late 2012 for refusing to serve military or alternative service. In 2011, the European Court for Human Rights ruled (Bayatyan v. Armenia) that the applicant's rights under Article 9 of the Convention (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion) had been violated. Legal amendments, which were adopted by Parliament in a first hearing in March 2013, would establish a genuine alternative service of a clearly civilian nature and reduce the length of the alternative service by six months.

Democratic oversight of the defence & security sector, military justice, and human rights in the armed forces

25. Notwithstanding its new composition and new Chairman since the May 2012 elections, the **Standing Committee on Defence, National Security, and Internal Affairs** continues to play a relatively modest role in overseeing the Ministry of Defence. The members of this Committee receive the annual draft defence budget for consideration and discuss it in a joint meeting with the Standing Committee on Budgetary Affairs. There are also occasional discussions on specific defence issues and visits to specific units. Currently, the Committee is developing a joint action plan with DCAF and Ministry of Defence to strengthen democratic control over the armed forces. The action plan is likely to focus on enhancing capacity and an audit on defence related legislation. The Committee also intends to enhance interaction with civil society through the establishment of a public advisory group. However, the Committee did not hold hearings on specific defence-related issues since the May 2012 elections, and focussed more on internal security issues. The Committee has not been substantially involved in issues related to defence reform, Armenia's participation in international crisis management operations, or more politically sensitive defence issues, such as the non-combat casualties amongst conscripts. Only select groups of parliamentarians have access to detailed descriptions or

justifications of government defence spending, limiting the budgetary control usually exercised by Parliaments, and the formal mandate of the Committee is fairly narrow (relating only to budgetary issues and ratification of international agreements). It is still recommended to open the debate on defence matters, including the budget, to the National Assembly as this might increase their interest in defence matters and also help justify requirements included in the SDR-based mid-term plan. A strengthening of the legislation on access to official information might also be important to strengthen parliamentary control, as the interaction between the Committee and the Ministry of Defence is somewhat ad hoc in nature.

26. Over the past year, the **Ministry of Defence** continued its efforts to enhance transparency and the link between the armed forces and society. For this purpose, it concentrates its efforts in three main areas: greater transparency in the defence budget development and approval process, continuing to improve the process of access to information by society and generating public interest on defence matters. Most procurements are now fully open to a competitive process, except for armaments and ammunition. The Ministry has reduced the number of categories of documents that are classified. It has made progress in consolidating a civil service system within the MoD. Last year, Armenia also declassified and publicly released its latest IPAP. However, the Ministry of Defence continues to be viewed as a largely closed structure. The release of a broader range of documents is encouraged. The MOD may also wish to consider starting the practice of direct and regular reporting to the National Assembly, for instance by means of an Annual Report by the Minister of Defence. The MOD also maintains active external communications and continued its engagement with NGOs, including through a Public Council, which acts as an advisory body to the Minister of Defence. (see also paragraph 58).

27. Armenia's **Human Rights Defender** continues to play an active role and pays detailed attention to cases related to military conscripts and other military personnel. The office of the Ombudsman is reinforced with an advisor for military matters. Armenia indicated that all military personnel receive training on legal rights in courses provided at its different education and training institutes. During these courses, all personnel are informed of their rights, including the right to approach the Ombudsman. Armenia receives support in this area from the OSCE which helps train instructors and translated the OSCE manual covering Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel. During 2012, it opened six regional offices outside Yerevan. From September 2012, a pilot course called "Human Rights in the Armed Forces" was launched, which is to serve as a basis for a permanent training module.

28. The Ministry of Defence takes seriously the problems related to **hazing and other cases of mistreatment of conscripts** by officers and fellow soldiers. However, concerns remain. The number of deaths under non-combat conditions that occurred in the military continues to be high (local NGOs report some 44 non-combat casualties between January and November 2012). The main causes of these deaths seem to be poor interpersonal relations between commanders and subordinates, accidents with weapons and ammunitions, and road accidents. The start of the implementation of the new disciplinary

code is an important step creating more clarity for conscripts and commanders alike. The Disciplinary Code of the Armenian Armed Forces, approved in March 2012, covers non-criminal offenses and clarifies legal procedures to deal with them. The new code resulted in the establishment of disciplinary units (companies) with one unit per Corps. Delinquents will serve in these units for the prescribed time. Armenia has also initiated measures to reduce accidents (greater security on firing ranges and improved training of drivers). Improved leadership training for non-commissioned officers will also address some of the root causes of cases of abuse. The strengthening of the capacity of the Armenian armed forces to ensure unbiased and professional forensic investigations and analyses into these cases also remains of key importance. In the last report, Armenia sought support in the training of military police and Germany and the United States are now supporting some activities. Armenia has also started discussions with Italy.

29. Other agencies and services, in particular the police, including its police troops, and the border security service, have made further progress in developing a **special civil service** and thus "civilianizing" the security sector. The Police has significantly expanded the size of its special civil service (now about 1000 employees) and the number of departments staffed with civilians. However, the progress made also raises questions about the civilian control and accountability of other parts of the security sector in particular the National Security Service and subordinate Border Troops, which may also consider the development of a civilian component.

Combating Terrorism and Organized Crime and Cyber Defence

30. Armenia estimates that the threat level for any attacks within its borders is relatively low, however it has reviewed its preparedness to combat **terrorism** over the past year. A new National Strategy of fighting against Terrorism in the Republic of Armenia was approved in April 2012, and the Government adopted in November 2012 a programme-timetable for its implementation. The action plan aims to establish a more clear division of roles and responsibilities and to enhance inter-ministerial coordination. The National Security Council is tasked to supervise the programme's implementation and report every 6 months. Armenia has not yet ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of Terrorism, signed in November 2005. Armenia is also engaged in regional cooperation to respond to terrorist threats on the basis of the 2011-2013 CSTO "cooperation plan to combat terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism". Armenia is keen to compare with Allies and Partners best practice in the area of defence against terrorism. As a first step in that direction, Armenia is encouraged to consider sharing the new national strategy with NATO.

31. Armenia continues to be engaged in international meetings and workshops to counter the **proliferation of WMD** and their means of delivery. Armenia attended the 2012 Annual WMD Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Conference held in Budapest (Hungary) in June 2012, as well as the Advanced Research Workshop in the framework of the NATO SPS Programme on "Political, scientific and technological approaches to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540" in Chisinau (Moldova) in October 2012.