
EU COMMISSIONER LOOKS FORWARD TO 'GROUNDBREAKING' DEAL WITH ARMENIA

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The European Union and Armenia will sign a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) soon, a senior EU official said during a visit to Yerevan on Monday.

Johannes Hahn, the EU commissioner for European neighborhood policy, said the landmark accord will not only deepen the EUs ties with Armenia but also serve as an example to other countries.

Its relevance is going far beyond our bilateral relationship, Hahn said after talks with Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian. He called the CEPA a blueprint for possible other relationships.

This groundbreaking new agreement will help demonstrate that it is possible for Armenia to be part of the Eurasian integration process while also establishing comprehensive and enhanced relations with the EU, Hahn told a joint news conference.

Nalbandian confirmed that the deal is due to be signed at the EUs November 24 summit in Brussels that will focus on its Eastern Partnership program of privileged partnership with six former Soviet republics.

Armenia has close links with the EU and intends to expand comprehensive cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, Nalbandian said. The EU provides valuable assistance to reforms taking place in our country.

The EU Delegation in Armenia said over the weekend that Hahn will visit Yerevan to prepare for the Brussels summit. The commissioner was scheduled to meet with President Serzh Sarkisian and Prime Minister Karen Karapetian later on Monday.

The CEPA, which was finalized in March, reportedly contains the main political provisions of a more far-reaching Association Agreement which Brussels and Yerevan nearly concluded in 2013. Sarkisian prevented the signing of that agreement with his unexpected decision to seek Armenias accession to the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. The move was widely attributed to Russian pressure exerted on the Armenian government.

Speaking in August, the Armenian president dismissed suggestions that the planned alternative deal with the EU may also collapse at the last minute. We have no reason to not sign that document, he said of the CEPA.

Kaynak/Source: