
ARMENIA HOSTS SUMMIT OF FRENCH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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A summit of the world community of French-speaking countries is kicking off in Yerevan on October 11, with France's President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attending.

Dozens of leaders and representatives of member states of the International Organization of Francophonie are participating in the two-day summit in the Armenian capital.

Created in 1970, the Francophonie brings together 58 states and governments, many of them in Africa, representing 274 million French speakers, according to the organization. Its primary mission is to promote the French language as an international language, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity in the world.

Armenia joined the organization in 2004. France is home to an estimated 500,000 ethnic Armenians, and sizable Armenian communities also live in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, and other Francophone countries.

The summit at Yerevan's Karen Demirchian sports and concert complex will be chaired by Armenian President Armen Sarkisian and the country's government, which has declared October 11-12 nonworking days in the South Caucasus country.

Popular French singer Zaz will be among the artists to perform in Yerevan's central Republic Square at the gala concert scheduled later in the day.

A big part of the concert will be dedicated to famed French singer Charles Aznavour, the son of Armenian immigrants who died on October 1 at the age of 94.

In Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, and Romania are also members of the Francophonie.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine have observer's status.

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