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## **ARMENIA PM NOT CLARIFYING TIMEFRAME FOR NEXT CSTO CHIEF'S APPOINTMENT**

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The Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, did not rule out the possibility that the next Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary General may be appointed by bypassing Yerevan's respective position.

How can such a thing happen? he said at his press conference on Tuesday. It would mean that there is no CSTO at all.

In his words, Armenia's respective position is constructive.

We [Armenia] believe that the [secretary's general's] term there is [still] ours, Pashinyan stressed. But our partners [there] don't agree; they say the matter isn't settled, there is a need to discuss.

We are saying, Then let's put amendments to the [CSTO] charter, before the [next] appointment. If the person prematurely leaves the office of the Secretary General for some reasons, the matter should be settled.

We fully protect Armenia's interests.

In his words, all consultations within the framework of the CSTO were useful, and they had not been as such throughout the existence of this organization. Overall, Pashinyan positively assessed the climate at both the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union.

[But] sadly, most of the work is held behind closed doors, and [therefore] the society can't assess [it], he added. Profound, interested, and sometimes heated discussions are held [there].

And when asked whether the timeframes for the appointment of the next CSTO Secretary General were known, the Armenian PM responded that the respective discussions were still in progress.

State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, Stanislav Zas, has been proposed as candidate for the post of next CSTO Secretary General. The Belarusian candidature is approved by other CSTO members Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. But difficulties in the matter remain with Armenia, which withdrew its representative Yuri Khatchaturov from this post ahead of time and insists on appointing its own candidate to this post until 2020, when the countrys term in this office formally comes to an end.

Khatchaturov had stepped down from the aforesaid position due to the charges which Armenia has brought against him, and along the lines of the criminal case into the tragic events that occurred in capital city Yerevan, in March 2008.

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