



POLITICAL DIALOGUE

ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL COMPASS RESULTS

MONITORING OF THE 2019 ACTIVITIES OF THE RULING POWER

YEREVAN 2020

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POLITICAL COMPASS REPORT

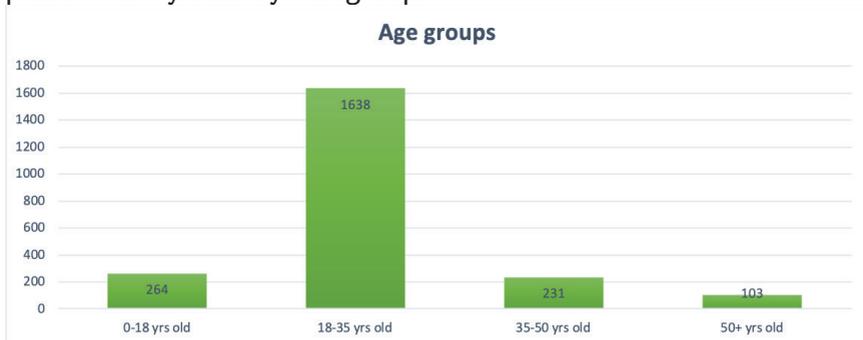
ABOUT THE COMPASS

The Political Compass is a quiz prepared by Political Dialogue (PD) in collaboration with political scientist and researcher Edgar Vardanyan and with the financial support of the European Endowment for Democracy. The quiz consists of 43 questions on different social, political, economic aspects of life. Through a detailed algorithm developed by PD's IT team, the app locates users on a two-axis political matrix, thus showing their approximate position on the political-ideological spectrum.

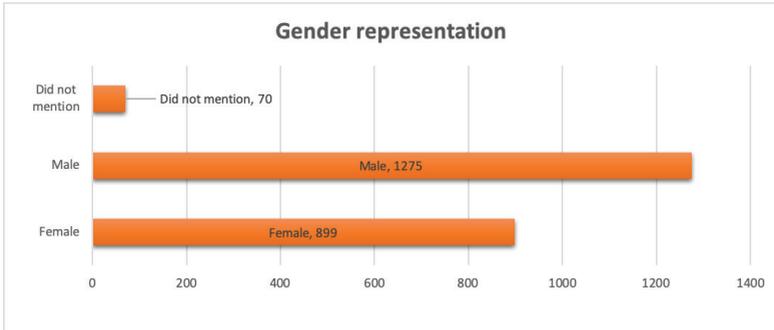
It must be reiterated that this report, as well as the questionnaire, are not scientific findings nor they intend to claim what the entire society believes in. Although the questionnaire has been prepared based on political theories and basics of political science, this report is not scientific and merely aims to track different societal trends.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE POLITICAL COMPASS USERS

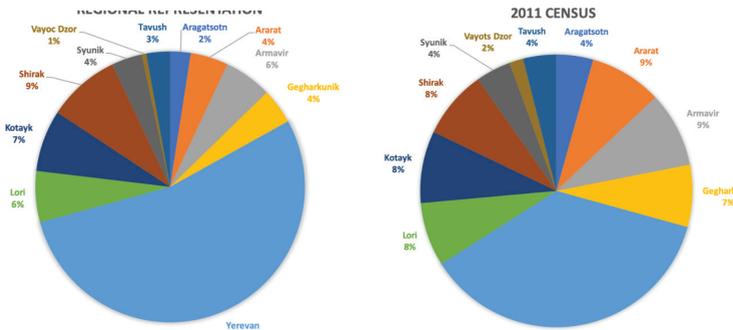
By the time this report was being prepared, 2244 users had filled in the questionnaire. Most of the users belong to the age group of 18-35 years old, constituting the youth. According to the RA legislation, citizens aged 18-35 are considered young people. The considerably unproportionate representation of this age group was to be expected, since the quiz was an online tool, advertised only on social media platforms, which is predominantly used by that group.



Besides, the 55% of the users were male, 41% female and 4% either preferred not to mention or did not identify as either.

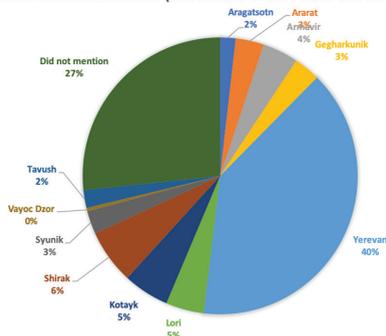


Furthermore, the quiz was filled in by the following representation of users from different regions of Armenia (for comparison, the 2011 census is also represented below):



The 27 percent of the users did not mention their region, thus leaving quite a big range of uncertainty to be able determine how proportionate the responses have been.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION (INCLUDING THOSE WHO DID NOT MENTION)



PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND TRENDS:

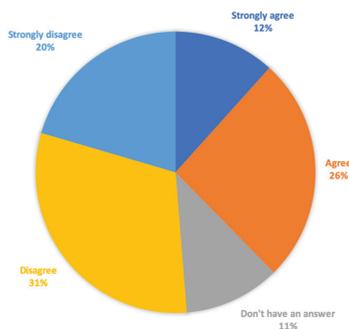
WAR AND PEACE

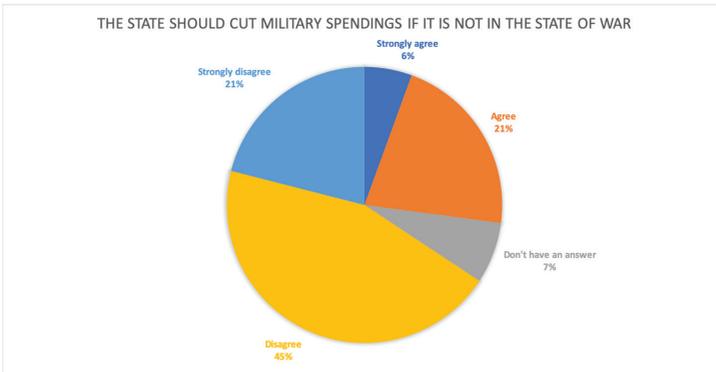
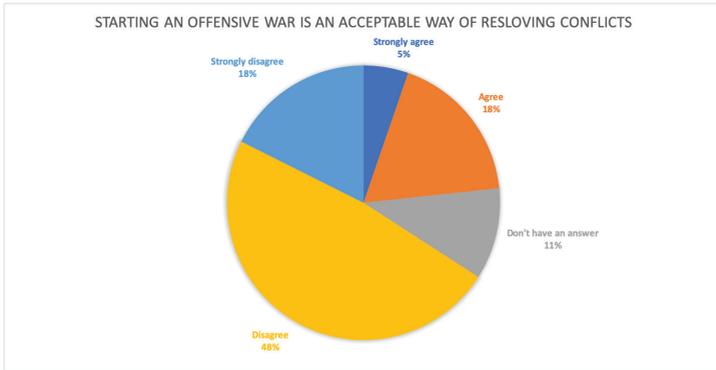
Matters related to conflict, war and peace are extremely sensitive to the Armenian society, to the extent of having become taboos. Furthermore, for decades the Armenian authorities have not only militarized the society, but also exploited the sensitivity of the topic to increase their almost non-existent legitimacy. This topic has always been used to divert the attention of the society from serious problems or issues in the country.

At the same time, for decades the rhetoric of Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities have been on different levels. While Azerbaijani authorities and especially Aliyev himself have very frequently used the rhetoric of threatening with a military attack to solve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, including statements like “Yerevan is our land”, etc., these type of statements have come from Armenian authorities to a considerably lesser extent.

It can be assumed that this rhetoric has had a considerable impact on the perceptions of the society, and the Compass questionnaire results come to prove this claim. Compass users, who are predominantly young people from Armenia, understand the importance of preparing the society for peace, believe that starting an aggressive attack (war) is not an acceptable means of solving problems.

THE SOCIETY SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR WAR, NOT PEACE.

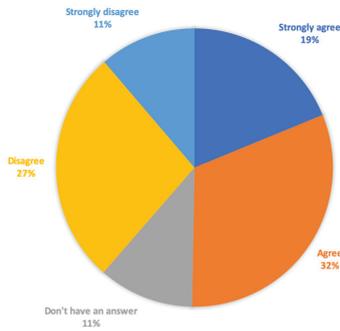




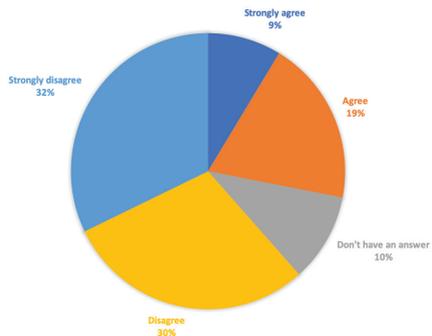
SOCIAL ISSUES

Some of the social matters which were asked on the Compass aimed to find out to what extent the users are leaning towards liberal or conservative stances. With some percentage differences depending on the matters, the results show that – as expected – the users have conservative views when it comes to social norms. More concerning, however, is that in most cases the taboo nature of most of the questions below have ensured a lack of awareness and increased ignorance that cannot be described as simply ‘conservatism’. For instance, the reproductive rights of women or the freedom of movement and assembly of LGBT+ persons are still extremely tabooed topics in Armenia, thus, the majority have views that not only show a conservative approach but also a lack of respect for human rights.

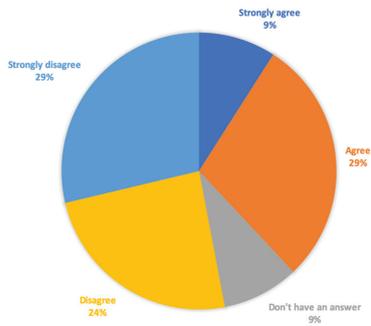
ABORTION SHOULD BE GENERALLY PROHIBITED

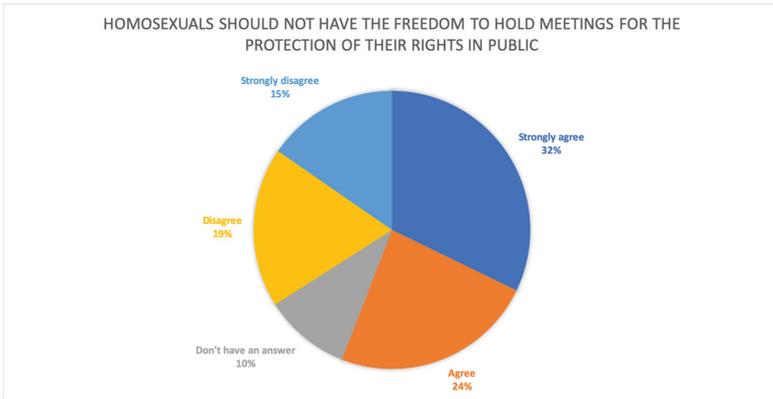


THE USE AND SALE OF MARIJUANA SHOULD BE LEGALIZED



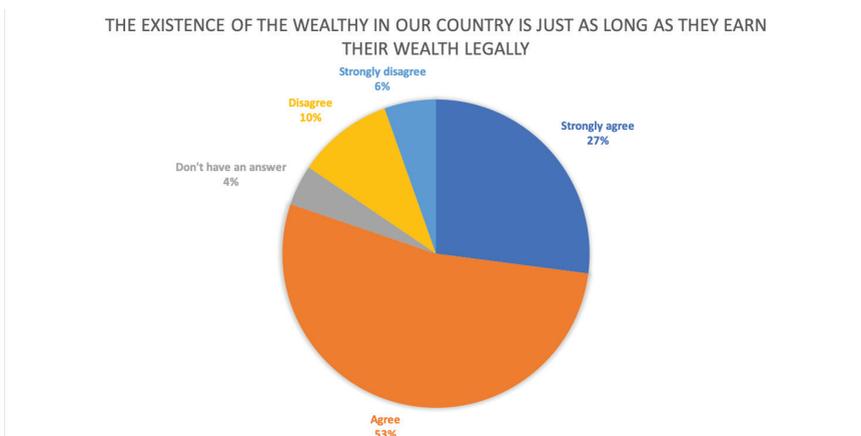
PROSTITUTION SHOULD BE LEGALIZED

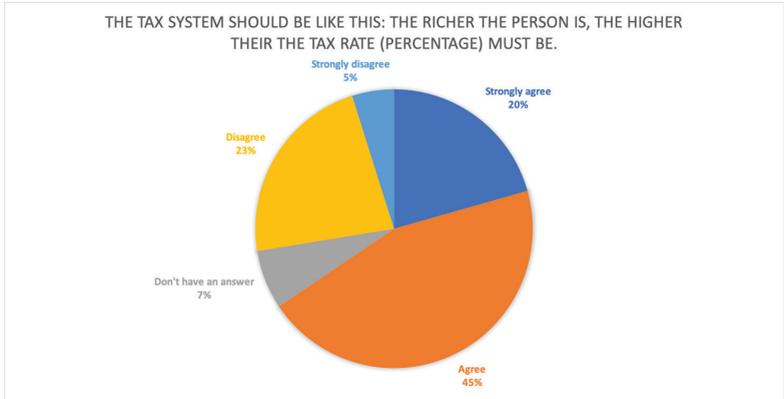
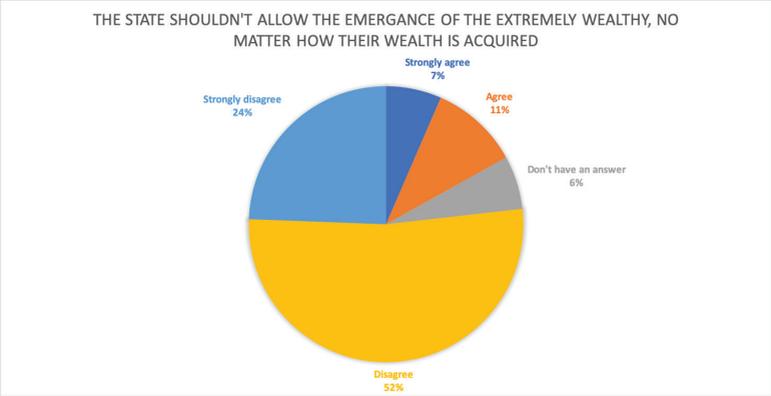




SOCIOECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Armenia is a country with approximately one third of its population living in poverty. Interestingly, however, this has not created a hatred among the society towards the notion of the wealthy. Of course, individual oligarchs, mostly connected to the previous regime and corruption schemes are disliked among the public, but otherwise the rich are not disliked. However, when it comes to taxation, the users mostly agreed that it is fair if the rich pay higher taxes (with bigger percentage) and the poor – less (progressive taxation).

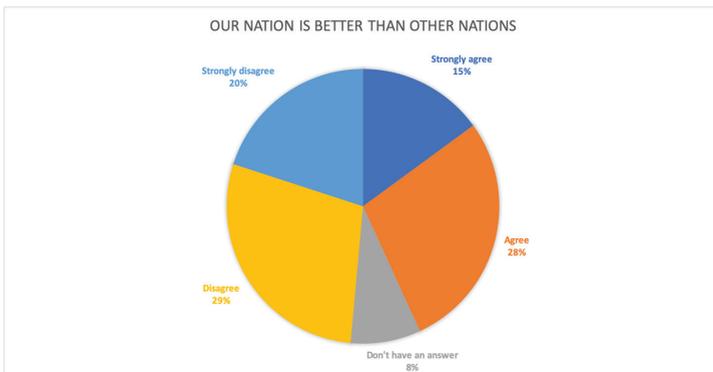




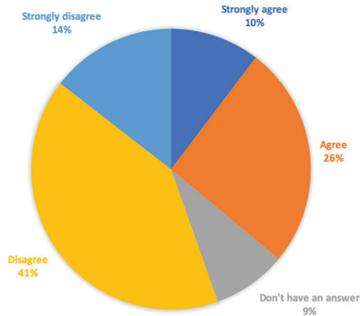
ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Armenia, a predominantly monoethnic country with little to no interaction with two of its four neighbours, small size and widespread diaspora, is a country that is usually expected to be prone to nationalism and religiousness. To the statement “the flow of migrants from non-Christian countries should be strictly limited”, 26% have agreed and 41% of the users have disagreed. Taking the abovementioned into consideration, 26% - an extremely high and alarming percentage – is not surprising. Importantly, this is also a consequence of years

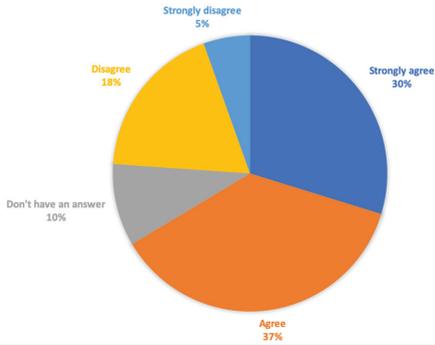
of militarization and nationalistic propaganda by the state institutions in the past. Usually in conversations about these topics the citizens feel a sense of panic or fear of being dominated by other nations in case they migrate and exceed Armenians in number. Some experts see this as a national security risk, also taking into consideration that the country is technically at war. Another view is that such a fear or concern is amplified by the historical memory of Armenians as a nation. It is even more thought-provoking to see that the users have been almost identically and equally divided into groups agreeing or disagreeing to the statement “Our nation is above some others”. The Compass users have predominantly agreed (67%) that the government should not give any religious group or church a privileged status in the society. However, it could be assumed that many users did not consider the Armenian Apostolic Church as a “religious organization”, since many other questions have shown lesser tolerance for religious diversity. Still, more than half of the users have disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement “The Church and the State should be inseparable”.



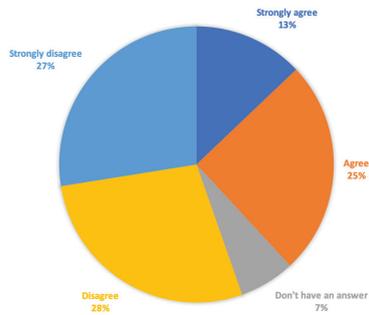
ENTRANCE OF IMMIGRANTS FROM COUNTRIES WITH OTHER RELIGIONS TO OUR COUNTRY SHOULD BE LIMITED.



THE STATE SHOULDN'T GRANT A PRIVILEGED STATUS TO ANY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OR CHURCH

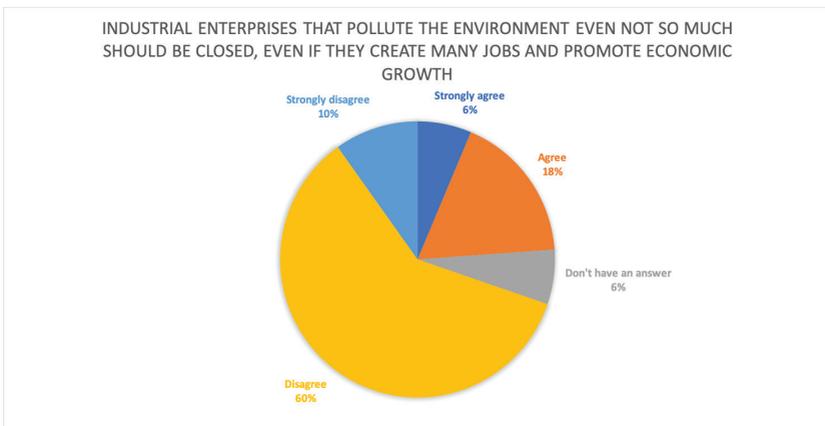
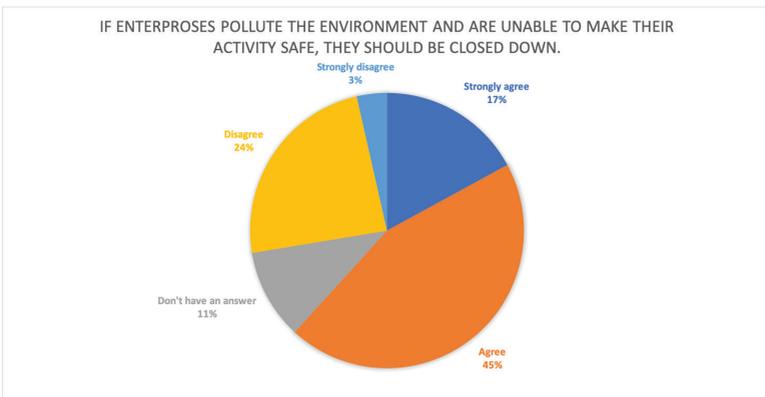


THE CHURCH SHOULD BE INSEPARABLE FROM THE STATE



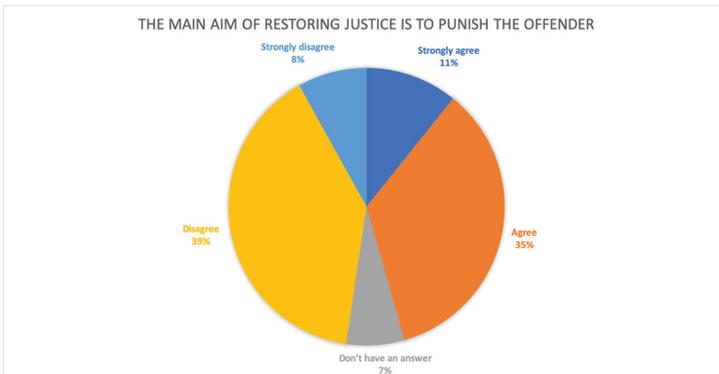
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The three biggest environmental movements of the last ten years-Trchkan, Teghut and Amulsar-show that our society is not completely indifferent towards the environmental issues. In this regard, the Compass results are quite interesting, particularly; the users have harsh appraisals of the enterprises that pollute the environment. However, when the question also mentions the economic benefits and new workplaces, the response of the users is more subtle.

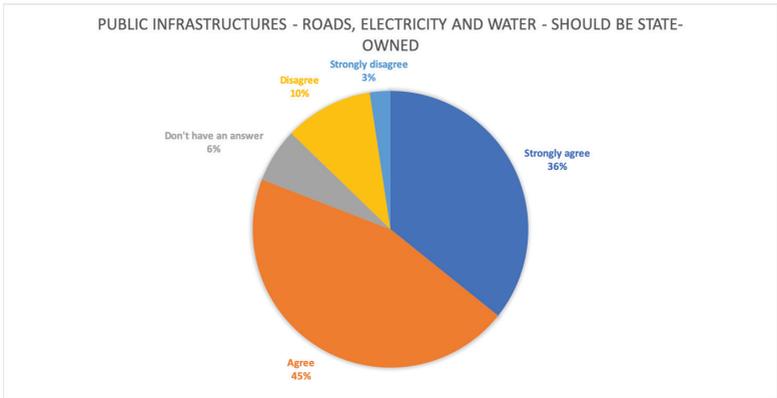
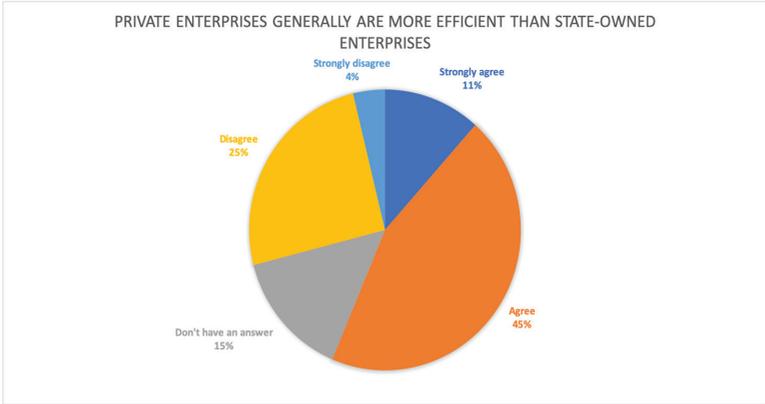


OTHER ISSUES

One of the main topics of discussion in recent months have been judicial reforms in Armenia. In light of those debates, the compass sheds light on how users perceive justice. Interestingly, 47% of users have disagreed to the statement “The main purpose of judicial processes is to punish the offenders”, thus, presumably, believing that the main purpose is rather rehabilitation (versus retribution).

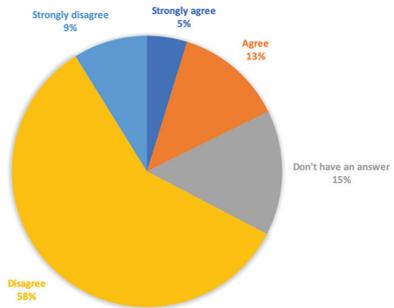


One of the most agreed upon statements has been the following: Public infrastructures – roads, electricity, water, etc. should be state-owned. This is interesting considering that many users also believe that governments are less efficient than private enterprises. However, the former statement's results are probably based on security concerns, rather than assumption of efficiency.



Armenia has often been both criticized and praised for its complementary foreign policy of membership in different international integration unions, thus it is interesting to see how the public perceives this issue. 67% of users do NOT agree that integration unions decrease the sovereignty of a state.

THE STATE SHOULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF ANY INTEGRATION UNION, SINCE MEMBERSHIP IN SUCH UNIONS REDUCES THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE



MONITORING

ABOUT MONITORING

Political Dialogue highlights the importance of holding the ruling political power accountable in maintaining its pre-electoral promises as well as the transparency of the implementation of those promises. In 2019, we have examined and monitored the compliance of the ruling power to its pre-electoral and post-electoral promises in several areas. We have tried to understand the extent to which the steps taken by the ruling power are in line with their promises and how well they fit into the Government's program.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

On February 12, 2019, the National Assembly of the seventh convocation started its work. One of the seven items on the agenda for the first session was to approve the government's program.

In his two-hour speech, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan presented the government's program and concluded. "We are launching an economic revolution in the Republic of Armenia."

"The economic policy will be based on an investment policy aimed at exporting, expanding employment and encouraging employment. As a result, the structure of the economy must undergo major changes: the high technological industry must become the locomotive of the economy."

Government Program 2019

Though the government's plan was quite comprehensive and included almost all layers of public-political life, the Prime Minister in his speech regularly emphasized the fact that the program is revolutionary for the economy itself. In his words, the outlined reforms in the field of

education, fight against corruption and restoration of justice system will create unprecedented conditions for development of our economy.

The discussion of the government program in the National Assembly continued for three days.

The abovementioned expression of the Prime Minister became the main target of criticism of the parliamentary opposition.

The main point of criticism of the two parliamentary opposition parties was that there are almost no concrete figures in the government program, it is not measurable and therefore cannot be revolutionary for the economy.

In the words of the deputies of the opposition, the program is very weak in terms of legal certainty and economic performance.

Interestingly, unlike the government program, the pre-election program of the parliamentary majority “My Step” Alliance did not have this problem and indicated the time and output measurability for almost all areas.

“In order to create a favorable investment environment, the operating tax rates, income taxes and dividends will be reduced. In particular, the current 20% profit tax rate will be reduced to 18%, dividends for residents and non-residents will henceforth be taxed at a uniform 5% rate. From 2019, the flat income tax rate will be set at 23 %, and then by 2023 it will gradually drop to 20%.”

Pre-election program of “My step” alliance

The public discourse surrounding the government program in the media, on social platforms, in the expert circles indicates that the program has been perceived in different ways among the public too. The fact that a number of provisions from the the “My Step” alliance pre-election program were not included in the government’s program, became the reason for serious criticism. For instance, paragraph 8 of the section on the economic reform priorities of the “My Step” alliance’s pre-election program is: **“We will amend the luxury tax law, expand**

and publicize the luxury tax objects and the list of luxury taxpayers, establishing an online tool for public oversight over its collection and distribution to restore social justice”, was not included in the government program or the later proposed tax reform package.

The government’s program was adopted by a vote of 81 to 37. The program also outlined the need for improving the tax system. After the parliamentary elections, the executive also presented the **Tax code amendments’ package.**

The representatives of the ruling power interpreted this package as the beginning of an economic revolution, and considered the package itself as the driving force of the economic revolution. On June 25, 2019 the draft law was fully adopted by the parliament in the second reading.

OPTIMIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

From the very beginning of the establishment of the new political conjuncture, there was discussion on the exaggerated nature of the public administration system and its ineffectiveness. Prime Minister Pashinyan announced in August 2018, “The public administration system is exaggerated and I think this is obvious to everyone. And because of this exaggeration, it is also ineffective.”

“The exaggerated system of the State administration, with the unjustified scope of its visible and invisible bodies, repeats its functions and fields. That causes ineffectiveness and the uncertainty of liability mechanisms and is an unjustified burden for taxpayers and a serious obstacle to raising Armenia’s competitiveness.”

Government Program 2019

Already in October 2018, First Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan told reporters that optimizing the State administration system and making radical changes is one of the issues on the government’s agenda.

According to him, the number of ministries would soon be 9-11 instead of the current 17. He emphasized that jointly with the public administration system there are foundations, non-commercial state agencies, which have more financial flows and resources, and which repeat the functions that ministries already have. The planned optimization also assumed a large number of reductions. This raised a great wave of protest among employees of state institutions subject to liquidation and unification. Former Vice President of the National Assembly Arpine Hovhannisyan published one of the government's internal records in which the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance expressed the opinion that the state would benefit "if more than 10,000 public servants who do not create additional results became unemployed".

In March 2019, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also referred to the statement, noting that the Government is not going to "take the scythe and reap the public administration system." They will be included into the government's human resources bank and in the future, they will be able to continue the public service.

Despite the public complaint, this decision should have been expected, as there was a detailed provision for this in the "My Step" alliance's pre-election program.

"We will remove the overlapping functions of all state departments and, as a result of their optimization, we will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of state agencies. Afterwards, with the results of the reform, we will shrink the massive state vehicle by promoting proper management of state resources and increasing the remuneration of state employees. Solving these problems, however, will not lead to personnel "massacre" and unemployment, and in the context of these reforms, we will develop measures to neutralize these risks."

Pre-election program of "My step" alliance

Under the new law on Government Structure and Activities, five ministries have been cut, with 12 current instead of the former 17. The

post of First Deputy Prime Minister was abolished, two Deputy Prime Ministers remained instead of three. The Ministries of Education, Sport and Culture were united. The Ministry of Agriculture was merged with the Ministry of Economic Development and Investment. The Ministry of Diaspora was cut, and instead of it, the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs to the Office of the Prime Minister was created with 25 staff members. The police and the National Security Service (NSS) continue to operate under the Prime Minister's control. The draft law on the Structure and Activities of the Government was discussed in the National Assembly on April 18, 2019 and on May 8, respectively, during the first and second readings. The discussions of the draft law were held in a heated atmosphere. It was adopted by 79 votes to 41 with 1 abstention.

Since July 2019, the government works within the new structure, but thus far there have been no official figures on how many public servants have been let go as a result of the optimization and overall how much money have been saved and where the savings are being directed.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS

Since the Bishkek ceasefire agreement in 1994, the Armenian side has had more than 2,000 casualties. This situation is one of the main challenges for the Government today. In the first point of its chapter, "Basic Guidelines for the activities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia", the Government defines one of its main priorities as:

"Ensuring Armenia's external and internal security, guaranteeing the security of Artsakh and continue its strengthening."

Government Program 2019

The interim government was already speaking about the need for reforms in the military sector and in particular the army reforms, and took the first major step towards it. On December 27, 2018, the Government decided to allocate 5 billion 705 million AMD from the reserve fund to

the Ministry of Defense to assist ex-servicemen registered as ‘in need of improvement of housing conditions’, but did not receive free housing during the military service and were released from military service as prescribed. Both the “My Step” alliance in its pre-election program and the Government in its current plan, have set quite an ambitious threshold in the modernization of armed forces, increase in military-technical equipment and intensification of combat ability.

“The armed forces will be equipped with weapons and technologies corresponding to the requirements of today’s military science, with precise long-range missile strikes, actual artillery strikes and anti-aircraft defense systems, which will increase the distance, accuracy and efficiency of their impact and fire impacts, will consistently develop multifunctional aviation, unmanned aerial vehicles systems, full range of radioelectronic and aerial exploration capabilities of the enemy’s territory. The armed forces of the Republic of Armenia will be replenished with military fighters (air combat).”

Pre-election program of “My step” alliance

“By establishing new standards for improving the combat mastery of the staff, the Government is aiming to replenish the armed forces with modern high-accuracy missile strikes, artillery attack and air defense complexes, multifunctional aviation, as well as automated and robotized air and ground systems, thus increasing the distance, accuracy, and efficiency of reconnaissance with the required depth, troop movement and fire engagement. The most important component of ensuring the development of the domestic, local military industry; the consistent replenishment of the frontline with technical means; and improvement of the effectiveness and safety of combat duty will remain in focus.”

Government program 2019

The Armenian Armed Forces have been equipped with Tor-M2 KM anti-aircraft missiles, which, according to military experts, is an important step towards making Armenia's anti-aircraft defense (air defense) system more efficient.

“The systems are manufactured in 2019. This was one of our key achievements of this year. I cannot say anything about the number, it's a military secret”, on December 21, 2019, Nikol Pashinyan wrote on his Facebook page.

However, “Razminfo” website reports that the acquisition of the above mentioned anti-aircraft missiles became known back in May 2018 during the broadcast of “Zinuzh” TV Program. It was stated that within a few months the systems would be in the armed forces.

Defense Minister David Tonoyan spoke in May 2019 about equipping the army with the most modern and large-scale weapons. He mentioned that our army does not seek to balance with the enemy, but to have an advantage. Besides the military-technical aspect of the army, the Government prioritizes the social security and prosperity of its servicemen and their families.

As the main achievements of the year, PM Pashinyan considered the acquisition of SU-30 SM supermaneuverable fighter aircraft, demonstrating its flight on Facebook.

“The Government envisages developing the social protection system of military servants and their family members, guaranteeing the complete provision with high-quality items and food. Housing and medical service programs are envisaged to be implemented to raise the level of social protection, attractiveness of the military service.”

Government program 2019

From June 1, 2019, the government has increased the salary of contract servicemen by 10%, and the salaries of junior staff and special servicemen by 20%.

On August 8, 2019 Session, the government decided to raise the amount

of monthly insurance of compulsory military servants by 2000 AMD for the military units performing combat duty in direct contact with the enemy and by 1000 AMD for the other units. The fixed monetary levels of insurance had not changed since 2009.

A new system for providing proper food to servicemen with an expanded menu and fresh foods has been developed and introduced by the Ministry of Defense in several military units.

During 2019 summer muster, nearly 15 percent more civilians have been drafted into compulsory military service. Compared to previous musters, the number of mustered citizens with poor health status has declined by approximately 10 percent during this period.

HEALTHCARE REFORMS

All countries with high level of poverty and low social security have serious issues in the field of public health as well.

“To ensure availability and accessibility of healthcare services for citizens, it is necessary to consistently continue introducing medical insurance system that will help provide each citizen in need of medical care and services with the aid and services in a proper and timely manner, irrespective of gender, age, place of residence and social status.”

Government program 2019

In order to improve the quality of healthcare provided to citizens by the State, salaries of state-run medical institutions, polyclinics and outpatient clinics have been raised twice in a year approximately from 30 to 40 percent. Polyclinics and outpatient staff salaries have increased from 178,000 to 240,000 in 2019, nurses to 80,000 to 100,000 AMDs. This is about 11,000 personnel from regions. RA Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan notes that these all are rates, not real money. Everyone’s salary increases without additional financial funds.

It is also planned to implement an insurance system for healthcare workers by the end of this year. In his words, “Not all components have been decided yet. It is not decided what percentage of the salary of working citizens should be transferred to the funds, but I can mention what percentages there are in the world: from 2% to 30%. We are inclined to start with small percentages so that there is no big burden on citizens, though it is wrong to call it a burden, because you are benefiting from it immediately.”

“The policy of the Government will be aimed at maintaining and improving the health of the individuals and the public health, ensuring provision of modern, high-quality and comprehensive healthcare services.”

Government program 2019

A serious step was taken by the Ministry of Health to protect public health in October 2018, when the Ministry put into circulation a draft law “On the reduction and prevention of health damage caused by tobacco use and the impact of cigarette smoke”. The adoption of the draft was knocked off because of the protests held by business owners and employees, as the new law would have a negative impact on their businesses. From the point of view of remaining faithful to your pre-electing program arguments, it should be noted that in the “My Step” pre-election program it was mentioned:

We will conduct healthy lifestyle campaigns, develop measures to reduce the risk factors contributing to the spread of the most common non-infectious diseases (unhealthy nutrition, tobacco, alcohol, physical inactivity, etc.).

Pre-election program of “My step” alliance

In May 2019, the Ministry submitted a new draft law on the fight

against smoking. According to the draft, smoking will be banned in closed public areas, including entrances and workplaces, regardless of property types, in medical facilities, educational establishments, in the territory of youth sports organizations, playgrounds, in the areas of immovable monuments of history and culture (with the exception of monuments considered to be residential houses), specially protected nature areas, under the cover of public transport stops, in the areas of hotel industries.

Health experts hope in case the law is adopted and actually implemented, we will have a 1.5-2 percent reduction in the number of smokers each year.

The Ministry has implemented the following changes to maintain public health and safety.

- A sanitary aviation service has been established for the first time in the history of Armenia. In case of the absence of necessary medical care in a specific area, the citizens can be immediately transported by a helicopter.
- Surgery for malignant tumors is free of charge since January 2019.
- Ischemic stroke treatment is free of charge since February 2019.
- Hospital care for children under 18 is free of charge, the care package will be expanded for disabled people of the first and second groups, family members of military servicemen and other citizens included in special groups to also include medical services performed by modern cardiac surgical technologies.
- Children under 7 can be transported by car only with a car-seat, secured by seat belts.

One of the points of the 2019 Government Program is the modernization of regional hospitals, particularly the construction and equipping of a new medical center in Vayots Dzor region with medical furniture, equipment and supplies. However, it was decided to remove the construction of the new hospital in Vayots Dzor from the loan program. Now, the Government is discussing financing of construction and equipping of the above-mentioned hospital by other means.

“We will develop and implement programs for proportional distribution of regional health infrastructure and high quality professional potential, aimed at encouraging the work of health care providers in the regions and development of other regional infrastructure capacities.”

Pre-election program of “My step” alliance

Though the project highlighted the importance of the development of regional health infrastructures, since mid-2018, while reviewing the work of maternity care organizations in Armenia, it was decided to close the Maralik maternity hospital. As the Ministry stopped funding the maternity hospital, people living in Maralik closed the Yerevan-Gyumri highway and demanded that the reconsideration of the decision. During the meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of Health, the participants of the protest stated that the Ministry does not send specialists to Maralik maternity hospital, which is why there are few specialists. The Human Rights Defender has launched an investigation on the closure of the hospital. Arsen Torosyan assures that the closure of Maralik maternity hospital is not his personal decision, but a consequence of a big process: the Minister noted this in a briefing with the reporters after the cabinet meeting. The Minister explained that “Maralik maternity hospital is being closed on a number of grounds: lack of necessary doctors, reduction of birth rate, building conditions. By closing this maternity hospital, we do not make any financial savings, as the funds will still be given to Artik Medical Center, which is 15 km away from Maralik”.

A number of specialists have warned that the closure of maternity hospitals on this principle cannot be a proper solution to the problem.

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Education and science are among the government's priorities set out in the Government program.

“Development of education and science is an overriding objective for the Government, and only through the development of education and science it will be possible to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth and universal welfare. Development of the sector will be closely linked to the strategy and priorities for advancement of the State.”

Government program 2019

Through various program provisions in different fields, the Government has emphasized the key importance of education and science in the development of the state.

The National Assembly has fully adopted one draft law on education referring to the tuition fee payment deadline. According to the draft, changes have been made in the RA law on general education, making possible for students to pay their tuition fees by semesters or months.

The draft law developed by one of the MPs of My Step alliance, through which it was planned to transfer the tuition fees of working students partially or fully from the income taxes they paid, did not receive the approval of the Standing Committee on Education and was not included in the agenda of the plenary sessions of the National Assembly. Now the draft law has been submitted again for discussion to the NA Standing Committee of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. According to the changes, only master's and postgraduate students can pay their tuition fees from their income taxes.

The Government has identified several issues in education and science sectors and has taken steps to find solutions.

“To provide students of elementary classes in general education schools of all regions with sustainable school meals.”

Government program 2019

Particularly, Ministry of Education and Science, Culture and Sports has ensured the transition of 117 schools of Aragatsotn region to the National Program “Sustainable School Nutrition”, providing food to 7514 preschool and 1-4 grade students.

At the same time, it should be noted that most of the educational initiatives included in the list of measures of 2019 that have the objective to ensure the implementation of the Government’s 2019-2023 action plan, are aimed at creating legal safeguards and legislative bases for ensuring the regulatory framework, implementation and oversight system.

On 5 September, Government during its governmental session approved to increase teachers’ salaries planned by the government program. Salaries of teachers working in general education institutions of Armenia have increased by 10 % since September. Accordingly, state allocations in the field of general education have increased by 1 billion 666 million 675 thousand AMDs. According to the package the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports developed, the school funding logic is changed and the minimum teacher salary is set at about 108,000 AMDs for full time engagement. According to Minister Arayik Harutyunyan, a lowest salary threshold for teachers has been set, based on which salaries will be raised.

Several months ago a package of proposals from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports sent to universities for feedback became the subject of a heated public debate. At the core of public discussions was the point of eliminating the mandatory teaching of Armenian language, Armenian literature and Armenian history at higher education institutions and leaving it to the discretion of scientific councils at universities. Both in the media and in professional circles, the issue was discussed for a long time, though the proposal of the Ministry also included many points on the self-management of universities, the

formation of board trustees and other issues related to the management of institutions of higher education.

However, there has been a growing wave of criticism from student groups and initiatives in public discourse and in the press. Their main concern is that radical reforms in higher education are necessary and because of their delay or absence, the values and ideas set by the revolution cannot and do not enter universities. In February this year, Minister Arayik Harutyunyan announced, “The first big discussion with the working group on the new law on higher education, science and research has just ended. We will have a new revolutionary law.”

The law addresses self-government of higher education institutions, autonomy and academic freedom, higher accountability and transparency, systematic interdependence of higher education, science and economics, effective interoperability of research and innovation and the education system, effective investment in higher education and science, and the need to encourage investment in science. The above mentioned issues were addressed by both “My Step” alliance and the Government program.

“We will strengthen the education-science-economy relation. We will use new formats for effective cooperation in these three areas, including active application of public-private partnerships and other principles.”

Pre-election program of “My step” alliance

“Higher education reforms will be targeted to:

Expansion of autonomy and academic freedom, creation of institutional basis for mechanisms for effective management, balanced accountability and transparency in higher educational institutions, ongoing improvement of the quality of higher education, ongoing increase of the research component in higher education.”

Government program 2019’

1 Translations of the fragments of the pre-election and governmental programs are non-official and have been realized by the PD staff.

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia Arevik Anapiosyan, during the closed-door discussion held by Political Dialogue organization on March 23, 2019 mentioned, “The Ministry doesn’t hurry to implement reforms drastically, as there are big risks in it. Reforms that have become tangible and visible in the short term can be dangerous because they are usually not properly planned and examined. The Ministry is currently in the planning phase.”



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