

THE EVOLUTION OF ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN'S COOPERATION WITH THE EU IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract

Since 2009, Armenia and Azerbaijan have been part of the Eastern Partnership Initiative, launched by the European Union. Armenia, with its interest and desire to cooperate with the EU in the Eastern Partnership, has also maintained its openness to Russia. The Eastern Partnership seems appealing as an opportunity for Azerbaijan. Economic openness, the prospect of securing and diversifying export routes for rich energy resources proves to be arguments in favor of fostering relations with the EU.

Keywords: European Union, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Eastern Partnership, cooperation.

Introduction

Armenia's geographical position (hard border with Azerbaijan and Turkey) has contributed to the fact that the country has a concept of complementarity in foreign policy. This concept is an attempt to balance specific interests, and on the other hand the lack of a concrete position in the direction of foreign policy.

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Armenia, with its interest and desire to cooperate with the EU in the Eastern Partnership, has also maintained its openness to Russia. When Armenia began negotiations on an Association Agreement with the EU in 2010-2012, Russia suddenly raised the price of Russian gas exports to Armenia and signed a contract with the Baku authorities for the supply of Russian weapons. Armenia was thus put under pressure to make another geopolitical option.

Even though Armenia joined the Eurasian Customs Union and later the Eurasian Economic Union, Armenia's interest in the EaP has not disappeared. Thus, it should be noted that Armenia's specific interest in the EaP is based on the concept of economic and foreign policy diversification. Given the country's geographical position, Armenia will always have to have a policy based on the principle of complementarity, and balancing Moscow's ambitions with the interests of the EU.

Azerbaijan has valuable oil resources that are proving to be very important in the management of its foreign policy. It is also the most populous state in the Caucasus region. Mostly Muslim, this country has developed special relations with the Islamic world. At the same time, it tried to break away from the model of Islamic states and give the state a strong secular character under the influence of Western culture. "Its position at the intersection of West and East has allowed Azerbaijan to develop a symbiosis of the values of both cultures".¹

The Eastern Partnership seems appealing as an opportunity for Azerbaijan. Economic openness, the prospect of securing and diversifying export routes for rich energy resources proves to be arguments in favor of fostering relations with the EU. In domestic politics, however, Azerbaijan has imposed a model much closer to the Russian one. The leaders of this country embraced the Russian discourse on "sovereign democracy" in the form of the concept of "responsible democracy".²

The harsh geopolitical realities of the Caucasus, where Azerbaijan has strained relations with Armenia and cordial relations with Georgia, have led to a westward orientation of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has an interest in

¹ Sergiy Gerasymchuk, Yaroslav Matiychyk, Oazu Nantoi, Alexandru Platon, *Concurența intereselor geopolitice în spațiul post-sovietic: perspective pentru țările Parteneriatului Estic*, Chișinău: Institutul de Politici Publice, p. 29

² *Ibidem*

working with the EU within the EaP and in finding a way out of its problematic relationship with its neighbours.

Its interest is therefore linked to cooperation with the EU, without any additional ambition of an integrative nature. This reality was increasingly understood over the period of 10 years of the EaP by the EU, which offered the possibility to deepen relations in the bilateral field depending on the specific level of ambition.

Analysis of Armenia and Azerbaijan's cooperation with the EU

Since 2009, Armenia and Azerbaijan have been part of the Eastern Partnership Initiative, launched by the European Union. Two years after the launch of the Eastern Partnership, in 2011 a study "European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries" appeared, developed by several experts from the countries participating in the EaP initiative - Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, which was a kind of barometer measuring the state of democracy in the Eastern Partnership states and included statistical information on the European integration of each EaP state, based on the analysis of the political, economic, civil and security dimension.

In order to identify and analyze the progress made by Armenia and Azerbaijan within the EaP, we used the Eastern Partnership Index, which includes aggregate statistical data on the level of integration of these states in the European space (Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum). The present analysis includes aggregated data from 2011 to 2019.

As it can be seen in the graphs below, since its launch, clear differences in preferences have been highlighted in the two countries in terms of national preferences for developing and strengthening the relationship with the EU. While Armenia perceived the program as an element of friction that could jeopardize the positive bilateral relationship with the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan differed in its balancing behavior between East and West.

The publication European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries analyzes over 800 indicators and offers a three-dimensional division, as follows:

Linkage examines the deepening of political, economic, and social relations between each state and the European Union. This dimension includes such components as:

1. Political dialogue - international security, political dialogue and co-operation - international security, political dialogue and co-operation;
2. Trade and economic integration - sectoral co-operation and trade flows;
3. Freedom, security and justice - sectoral cooperation - sectoral co-operation and trade flows;
4. Energy and transport - sectoral cooperation - sectoral co-operation and trade flows;
5. Education and people-to-people - people-to-people - citizens in Europe;
6. Assistance - international security, political dialogue, and co-operation.³

Approximation aims to adjust the legislation and the activity of the institutions of the partner states to the European standards, the observance of the recommendations and requirements submitted by the European Commission. This dimension includes the analysis of the following components:

1. Democracy - deep and sustainable democracy;
2. Rule of law - deep and sustainable democracy;
3. Governance quality - deep and sustainable democracy;
4. Market economy - market economy and DCFTA - EU integration and convergence;
5. Freedom, security and justice - sectoral approximation - EU integration and convergence;
6. Energy and transport - sectoral approximation - EU integration and convergence;

³ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, "European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014", [<https://eap-csf.eu/for-download/>], 20 March 2021.

7. Environment - sectoral approximation - EU integration and convergence;
8. Education and people to people - sectoral approximation - sustainable development.⁴

Management assesses the evolution of the management structures and policies of the EaP states. The management dimension includes the following categories:

1. Coordination Mechanism - institutional arrangements for european integration;
2. Legal approximation mechanism;
3. Participation of civil society;
4. Management of EU Assistance;
5. Training in the field of european integration;
6. Awareness raising about european integration.⁵

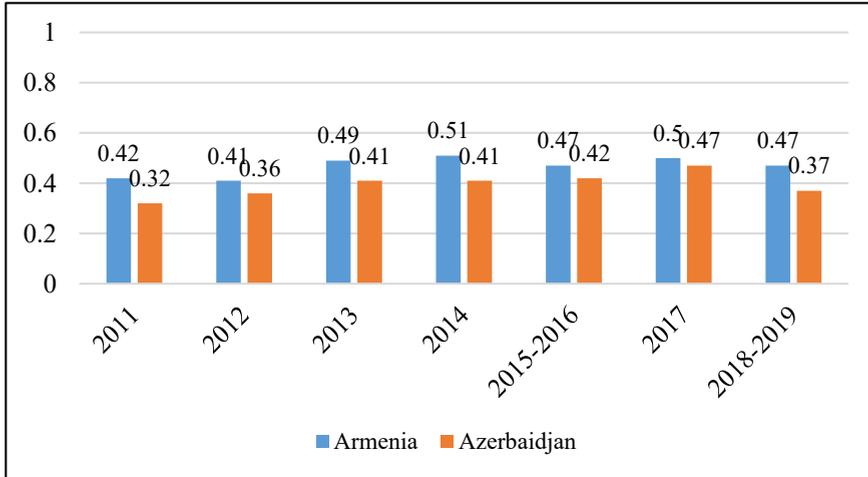
Linkage

In the *Linkage* domain, we can see that the Armenian indicator has been increasing since 2011, with the best result in 2014, after which there is a decrease. At the same time, Azerbaijan has registered an increasingly positive score since 2011, the events of 2013, 2014, 2015 not changing their trajectory, and only in 2018-2019 we notice a decrease compared to previous years (see Figure 1).

It should be noted, in the case of Azerbaijan and Armenia, that they do not aspire to a high level of integration with the EU, either preferring a balancing behaviour between the EU and the Russian Federation (the case of Azerbaijan) or preferring a closer relationship with the Russian Federation (the case of Armenia). In order to understand the progress made by Azerbaijan and Armenia in this regard, we will analyze each category in the linkage dimension separately.

⁴ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, "European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014", [<https://eap-csf.eu/for-download/>], 20 March 2021.

⁵ *Ibidem*

Figure 1. **Linkage Dimension**– Armenia, Azerbaijan

Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The first category in Linkage Dimension is that of *political dialogue*. The deepening of the political dialogue depends significantly on the institutional structure of each EaP state. It should be noted that, since 2015, the category of political dialogue has been included in the category of “international security, political dialogue and cooperation”. This category measures how EaP and EU governments cooperate in crucial areas of international security, defence and border management.

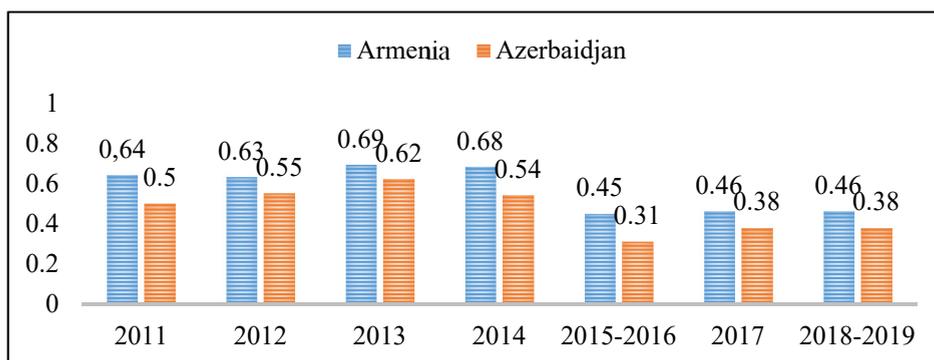
Armenia gets a good score in this category in the first four years analyzed, but since 2015 the result is worse compared to the first four years, but stable.

In the case of Azerbaijan, in the category of political dialogue, we observe the same trend as in the case of Armenia. In the first three years (2011-2013) Azerbaijan has a good score, on the increase, after which in 2014-2016 there is a decrease and in the last years (2017-2019) there is a stable result, but quite small. It should be noted that since 2015, the category of political dialogue has been included in the category of international security,

political dialogue, and cooperation, which has negatively influenced the score of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In this dimension, in the years 2011-2019, Romania registered a better score compared to Azerbaijan.

Figure 2. **Political dialogue** - international security, political dialogue, and co-operation - sectoral co-operation and trade flows, Linkage Dimension- Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The second category in the linkage dimension is that of *trade and economic integration*, which since 2015 has been included in “*sectoral cooperation and trade flows*”. This category examines the extent to which trade and investment in EaP countries are integrated into the EU.

At the same time, the integration of energy sources/markets and the density of transport network is assessed separately, as these two sectors constitute crucial infrastructure for economic integration.⁶

The results obtained in this category show the efforts made towards improving trade flows, removing barriers to trade in goods and boosting foreign direct investment. This category includes the following sub-

⁶ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, “Eastern Partnership Index 2017, Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development”, [<https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/EaP-Index-2017.pdf>], 25 February 2021.

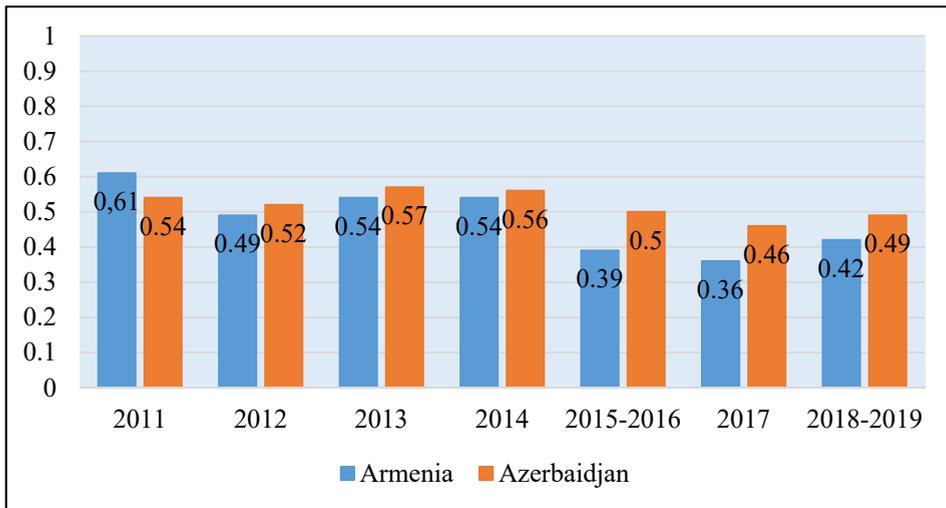
categories – Trade with EU: Commodities; Investments and Loans from EU; Trade with EU: Services; Trade Defence Instruments; Energy Interdependence; Transport: Integration with Trans-European Networks; Environment.

Carrying out the analysis of Armenia’s results in the category of trade and economic integration in the period 2011-2019, we observe the following evolution – decrease (2012) – increase (2013) – stagnation (2014) – decrease (2015-2016-2017) – increase (2018-2019).

In the case of Azerbaijan, we observe the following evolution – decrease (2012) – increase (2013) – decrease (2014-2015-2016-2017) – increase (2018-2019).

If we compare the results obtained by Armenia and Azerbaijan in this category, then we emphasize that Armenia in these years had a better score than Azerbaijan.

Figure 3. **Trade and economic integration** - sectoral co-operation and trade flows, Linkage Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan

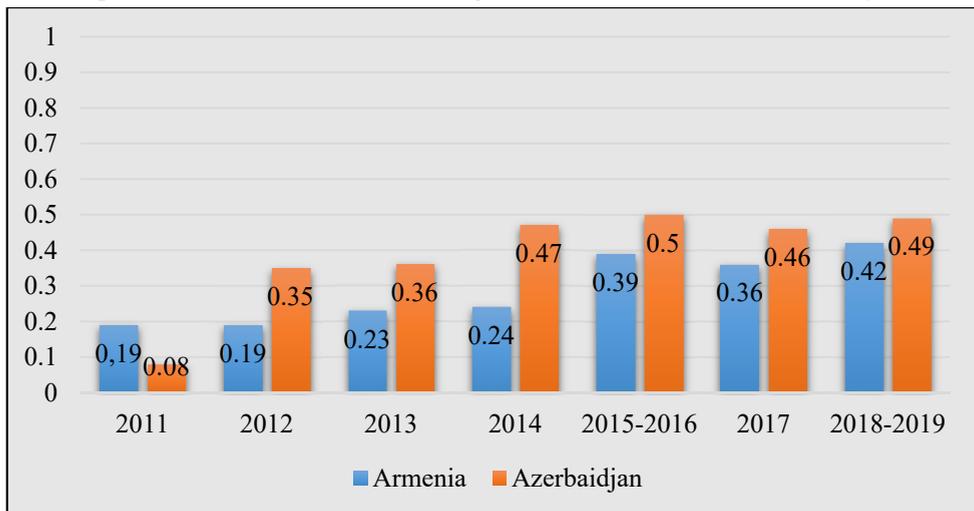


Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The third category in the linkage dimension is that of *freedom, security, and justice*, which later in 2012 is included in “*sectoral cooperation*”, and since 2015 in “*sectoral cooperation and trade flows*”. Cooperation in the area of freedom, security and justice between the EU and the EaP countries is a matter of great importance, as it indicates the level of integration/cooperation in the most sensitive areas, which requires high trust between partners. Cooperation in this area is closely linked to the maturity of democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The increase of cooperation standards in this area can encourage countries to pursue reforms in the fight against corruption and organized crime, the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking and the promotion of reforms aimed at better protection of human rights, more effective law enforcement and transparent judicial system.⁷

Figure 4. **Freedom, security, and justice** - sectoral cooperation - sectoral cooperation and trade flows, Linkage Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

⁷ International Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundations, “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011”, [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/European-Integration-Index_2011.pdf], 25 February 2021.

Armenia and Azerbaijan scores in this category are extremely low. In the case of Armenia, from 2011 to 2016 we see a small increase. In 2017 there is a decrease and in 2018-2019 again a small increase. Starting with 2012, Azerbaijan registers a small decrease, after which in 2013 an increase, in 2014 a stagnation, in 2015-2017 a decrease and in 2018-2019 a small increase.

If in the Linkage dimension and in the categories of political dialogue and trade and economic integration, Armenia had a better score, then in the category of freedom, security, and justice Azerbaijan, since 2012, has had a better result compared to Armenia.

The fourth category in the linkage dimension is that of *energy and transport*. This category is initially measured separately, but later in 2012 it is also included in the “*sectoral cooperation*” category, and since 2015 in the “*sectoral cooperation and trade flows*” category.

In terms of energy, the index examines the extent to which the energy markets of the EaP countries are integrated and organized in a similar way to the EU energy markets. As issues related to the energy sector and energy policy receive much attention in EU policy, the Index examines energy market regulation and market structure in line with EU standards. The energy trade analysis includes mineral fuels, mineral oils, and their distillation products. When it comes to transport, the basic idea is that transport connections should be easier, safer for all transport users in the EU and the EAP countries.⁸

Analyzing the results of the Republic of Armenia in the category of energy and transport, we find a very modest indicator in 2011, followed by a gradual increase until 2014 and a sudden increase in 2015-2016, followed by a small decrease in 2017 and a significant increase in 2018-2019, being the best score in these years.

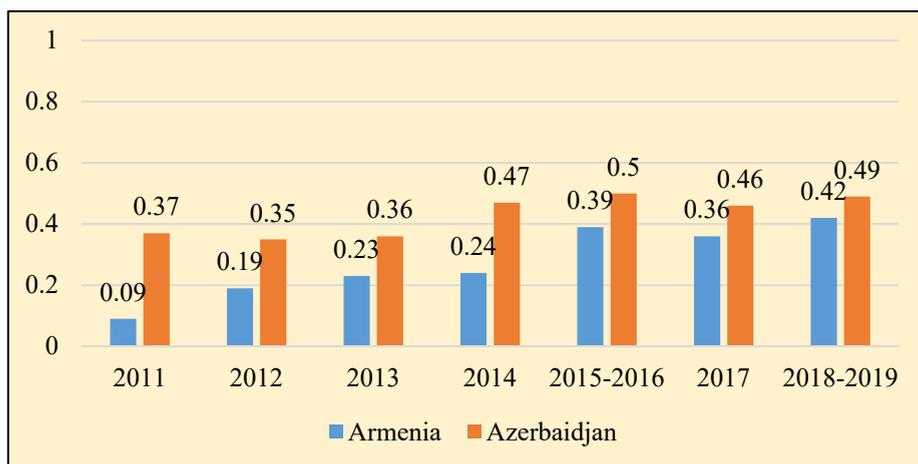
⁸ International Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundations, “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011”, [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/European-Integration-Index_2011.pdf], 25 February 2021.

Regarding the result of Azerbaijan, here we mention a small decrease from 2011 to 2013, a sharp increase in 2014-2016, and a decrease in 2017 and an increase in 2018-2019, the best score being recorded in 2015-2016 (0, 50 of 1.00).

In terms of energy and transport, Azerbaijan is an obvious leader over the years analyzed compared to Armenia, even if in 2018-2019, Armenia's score increases.

In this context, it should be noted that Azerbaijan is one of the main producers of natural gas, and the EU is the main consumer of Azerbaijani natural gas passing through Azerbaijan. Last but not least, the Southern Gas Corridor, a project designed to transport natural gas from the Caspian, Central Asian and Middle Eastern areas to European markets.⁹

Figure 5. **Energy and transport** - sectoral cooperation - sectoral co-operation and trade flows, Linkage Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

⁹ EU – Azerbaijan relations – factsheet, European Union External Action, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4013/node/4013_en], 15 March 2021.

The fifth category in the linkage dimension is that of *Education and People to People*. In 2012 the name of this category changes to “*People to People*”, and since 2015 it has changed to “*Citizens in Europe*”. This category analyzes the mobility of people, including students; educational policies, with a focus on the Bologna process; Mobility, including academic and student mobility, policies on culture, youth, information society, media, and the use of audiovisual; and Participation in EU programs and agencies.

“*Citizens in Europe*” measures the expansion of citizens’ mobility, migration, and communication flows between EaP and EU countries. The index focuses on migration as a process leading to deeper European integration. At the same time, this category includes cultural exchange and cooperation, affinity with the European Union, cooperation in science and education, mobility, including academic and student mobility, digital and information society.¹⁰

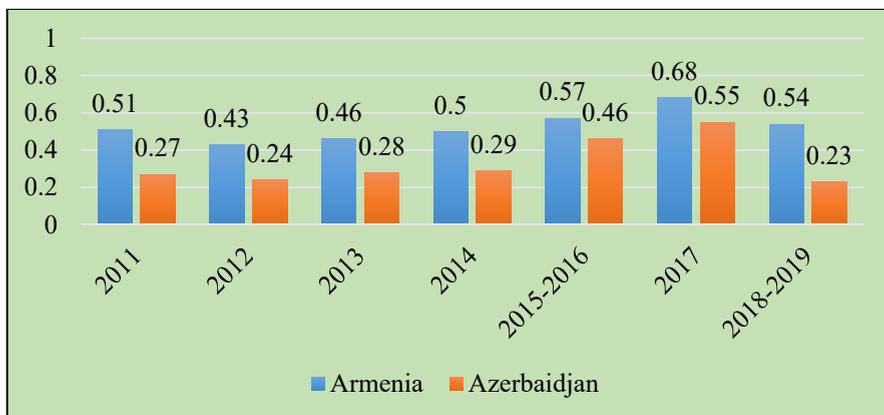
Examining Armenia’s results in this category, we see the following evolution in this period – good result in 2011; decrease in 2012; gradual increase in 2013-2016 and sudden increase in 2017 and small decrease in 2018-2019, with the best result in 2017 (0.68 out of 1.00).

In terms of Education and Mobility, Azerbaijan in the years 2011-2014 had a fairly modest result, with an increase in 2015-2017 and a decrease in 2018-2019, recording the best score in 2017 (0.55 out of 1.00).

We can see that in 2017, Armenia and Azerbaijan recorded the highest scores. At the same time, in recent years, in the field of education and mobility, Armenia has a much better result compared to Azerbaijan.

¹⁰ Eastern Partnership Index 2017, Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development. [<https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/EaP-Index-2017.pdf>], 25 February 2021.

Figure 6. **Education and people-to-people** - people-to-people - citizens in Europe, Linkage Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



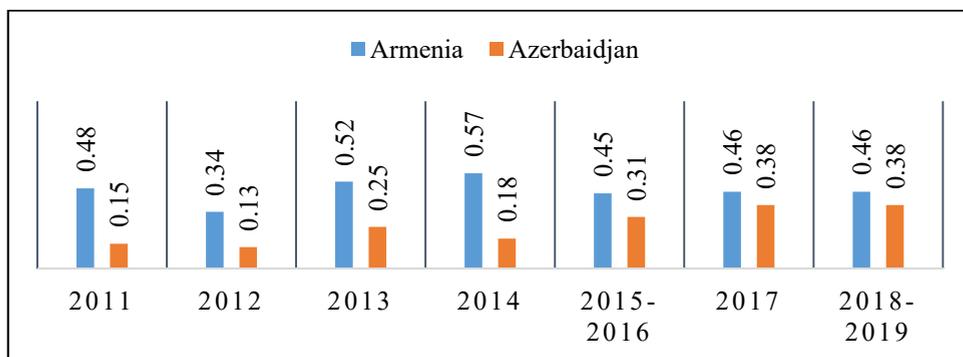
Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The sixth category in the linkage dimension is that of *Assistance*, which since 2015 falls into the category “*Citizens in Europe*”. This category measures EU development aid, partnership instruments – national and regional, technical assistance and cooperation with European financial institutions.

In the assistance category, Armenia recorded a fairly good result, having the highest score in 2014 (0.57 out of 1.00), followed by a period of stagnation in 2015-2019.

Azerbaijan in the assistance category, obtains a very low score in 2011-2014, the lowest being in 2012 (0.13 out of 1.00). In the period 2015-2019, Azerbaijan's score is gradually increasing. In the field of assistance, which measures EU development aid, Armenia is an absolute leader compared to Azerbaijan.

Figure 7. **Assistance** - international security, political dialogue and co-operation, Linkage Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

Approximation

The *Approximation Dimension* aims to evaluate the institutions and policies of the EaP countries and compare them with those typical of EU Member States. The sections on deep and sustainable democracy and the market economy and the DCFTA are not only basic conditions that the EU imposes on the countries concerned for closer relations with it but are also undisputed political objectives and legitimize the general principles in all EaP countries.¹¹

This dimension includes the analysis of the following components: legislation, practices, and institutions in the EaP countries and their compliance with EU standards in line with EU requirements. We mention that, initially in 2011, the approximation dimension was divided into 8 sub-categories such as: Democracy; Rule of Law; Governance Quality; Market Economy; Freedom, security, and justice; Energy and transport; Environment; Education and People to People.

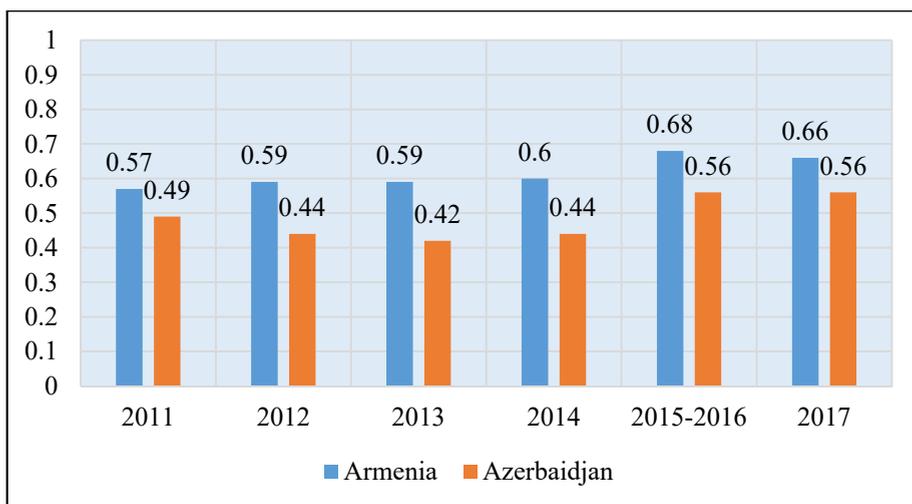
¹¹ European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, International Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundations, [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/European-Integration-Index_2011.pdf], 25 February 2021.

In 2012, these categories were reduced to 3: Deep and Sustainable Democracy; Market Economy and DCFTA; Sectoral Approximation. At the same time, since 2015 the names of these categories have changed – Deep and Sustainable Democracy; EU Integration and Convergence; Sustainable Development. In order to research the result obtained by the Republic of Moldova in this dimension, we will analyze each category separately.

Approximation Dimension is a dimension to which Armenia gets a gradually improving score every year. Thus, Armenia's score is continuously increasing from 2011 to 2015-2016, when it registers the highest result (0.68 out of 1.00) and only in 2017 it drops a bit with a score of 0.66. We note that Armenia's upward trend was stopped in 2015, when Armenia saw a visible decline until 2017.

Azerbaijan has been steadily declining from 2011 to 2013, with an upward trend from 2014 to 2015 and a stagnation in 2016-2017, so that growth, although visible, cannot be said to make a difference at the regional level.

Figure 8. **Approximation** Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

We can see a demarcation point in 2014, when Armenia and Azerbaijan also recorded an upward trend. At the same time, in terms of approximation, Armenia again has a better result than Azerbaijan.

The first categories in the approximation dimension that we will analyze will be – Democracy; *Rule of Law and Governance Quality*. We joined these categories because, in 2012, one year after the launch of the Eastern Partnership Indices, they were included in a single category – *Deep and Sustainable Democracy*.

The following indicators are examined in this category: Democratic Rights and Elections, including Political Pluralism; Human Rights and Protection Against Torture; Accountability; Independent Media; Freedom of Speech and Assembly; Independent Judiciary; Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination; Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption; Public Administration.¹²

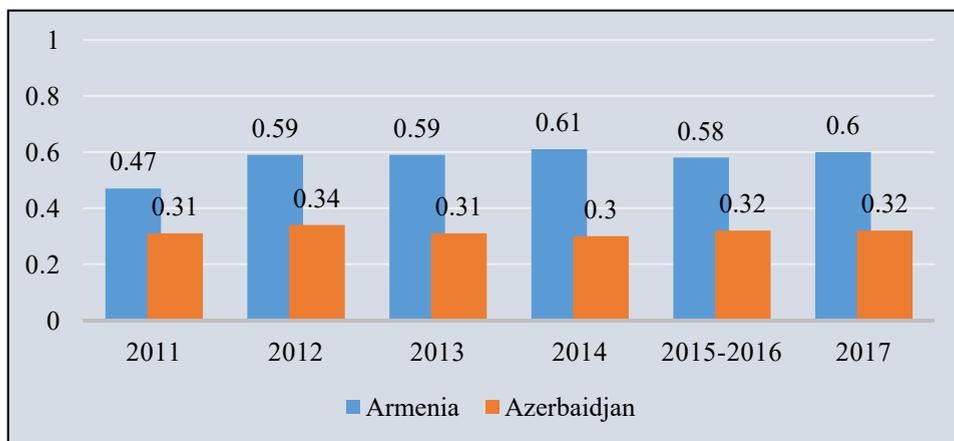
In terms of democracy, the rule of law and the quality of government, Armenia recorded a fairly good and stable score, starting with 0.47 out of 1.00 in 2011 and ending with 0.60 in 2017.

At the same time, Azerbaijan, on the other hand, recorded a very small but still stable score, averaging 0.30-0.34 out of 1.00.

Thus, Armenia has a result twice as good compared to Azerbaijan in terms of democracy, the rule of law and the quality of government.

¹² Eastern Partnership Index 2017, Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development. [<https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/EaP-Index-2017.pdf>], 25 February 2021.

Figure 9. **Democracy**, Rule of law, Governance quality - Deep and Sustainable Democracy, Approximation Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The second category in the approximation dimension includes – *Market Economy* and *Freedom, security, and justice*, which later in 2012 was included in the “*Market Economy and DCFTA*”, and since 2015 has the name – *EU Integration and Convergence*. In this category, the quality of business climate and the progress of transition were analyzed. The analysis is based on widely used indicators for international economic comparison, specific factors, and short-term shocks.¹³

The EU Integration and Convergence category is a measure of integration and convergence with EU rules on trade, security, migration, energy, environment, transport, infrastructure. This includes the analysis of the following components: Market Economy and DCFTA; Freedom, Security and Justice; Energy: Legislation Convergence and Energy Policy; Environment and Climate Policy; Transport: Regulatory Policy (Eastern Partnership Index, 2017).

¹³ European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2013, International Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundations, [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/European-Integration-Index_2013.pdf], 25 February 2021

Regarding Armenia, here we find an increase in the period 2011-2012, with subsequent stagnation in 2013-2014 and increase in 2015-2016-2017.

Azerbaijan, with a fairly good score in 2011, recorded a gradual decrease in 2012, 2013, 2014, followed by a sharp increase in 2015, 2016, 2017.

Thus, in terms of market economy, Armenia achieved a better result compared to Azerbaijan.

Figure 10. **Market economy** - market economy and DCFTA - EU integration and convergence, Approximation Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

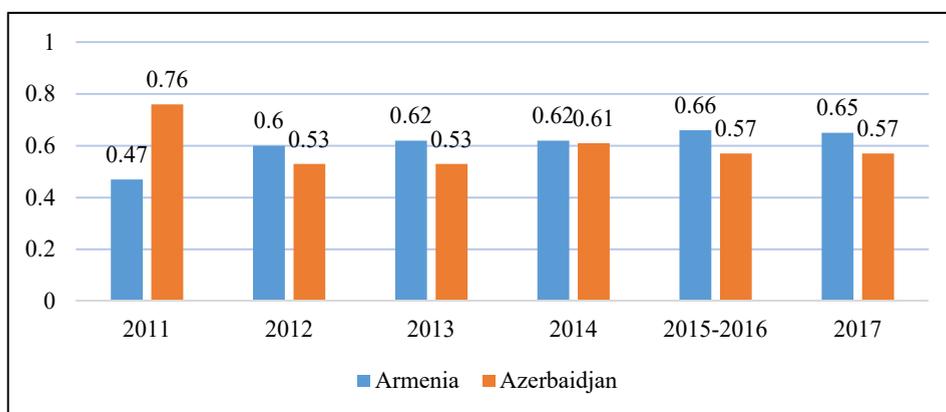
The third category in the approximation dimension includes: *Freedom, security, and justice; Energy and transport; Environment; Education and People to People*, and in 2012 they were united in a single category “*Sectoral approximation*”, and in 2015 in *EU integration and convergence*.

In this category, Armenia experienced an increase from 2011 to 2013, followed by stagnation in 2014 and growth in 2015-2017, the best result being recorded in the years 2015-2016 (0.66 out of 1.00).

Azerbaijan in this category starts with a very high score (0.76 out of 1.00), followed by a sharp decline in 2012 and stagnation in 2013. In 2014, Azerbaijan records an increase, followed by a stagnation in the next three years.

We can see that in this category, Armenia and Azerbaijan start in 2011 with very different scores (0.76 and 0.47), Azerbaijan having a better result, but in the following years (2012-2017) Armenia gets a better result than Azerbaijan.

Figure 11. **Freedom, security and justice**, Energy and transport, Environment - sectoral approximation - EU integration and convergence, Approximation Dimension- Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

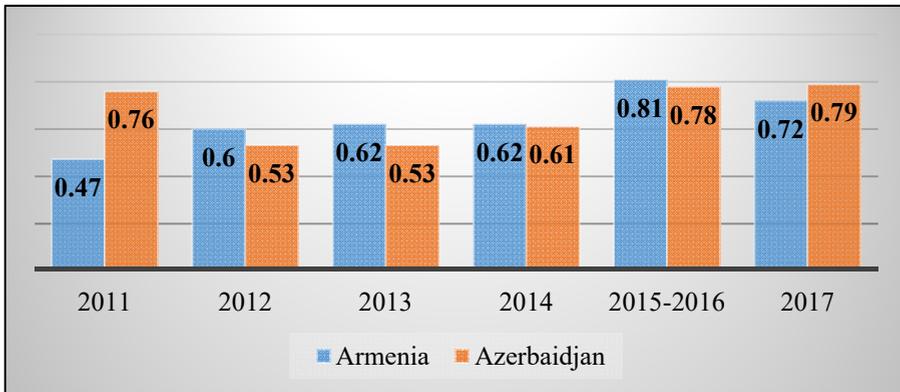
The fourth category *Education and people to people*, incorporated since 2012 in sectoral approximation and then, since 2015, in sustainable development, gives us an oscillating image of educational, cultural and youth policies.

In the field of education and mobility, Armenia achieves a good result every year, its indicator increasing from 2011 to 2016, with a slight stagnation in 2013-2014 and a decrease in 2017.

Azerbaijan, with a high score in 2011 (0.76 out of 1.00), continues with a sharp decline in 2012 and stagnation in 2013, followed by a gradual increase to the highest score in 2017 (0.79 out of 1.00).

If we compare the result of these two countries in the field of education and mobility, then we notice that in 2011, Azerbaijan has a better score than Armenia, but in the following years (2012-2016) Armenia gets a better result, until in 2017 Azerbaijan again records a higher score than Armenia.

Figure 12. **Education and people to people** - sectoral approximation - sustainable development, Approximation Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014” and “Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016, 2017”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

Management

Management Dimension represents the evolution of management structures and policies in the Eastern Partnership countries, which aim at European integration in the EU. Management analyzes the institutional structures and coordination, management of European integration. This

dimension reflects the level of commitment to European integration and the ability to meet the growing EU agenda in each EaP country.¹⁴

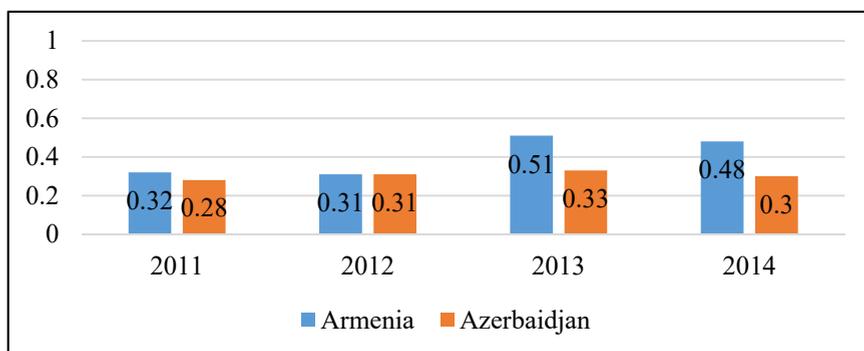
Initially, the management dimension included four categories: Coordination Mechanism; Legal Approximation Mechanism; Participation of civil society; Management of EU Assistance. Since 2012 we already have six categories: Institutional Arrangements for European Integration; Legal Approximation Mechanism; Management of EU Assistance; Training in the field of European Integration; Awareness Raising about European Integration; Participation of civil society.

The analysis of the management dimension gives us an image of only four-time intervals 2011-2014, this being subsequently analyzed as part of the other two dimensions of the EaP Index. In terms of management dimension, Armenia registers in 2011-2012 a stagnation, in 2013 an increase and in 2014 a decrease.

At the same time, Azerbaijan's result in this dimension is stable, with an insignificant increase from 2011 to 2013 and a decrease in 2014.

In the field of management, Armenia scored better than Azerbaijan in the years analyzed.

Figure 13. **Management Dimension**– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

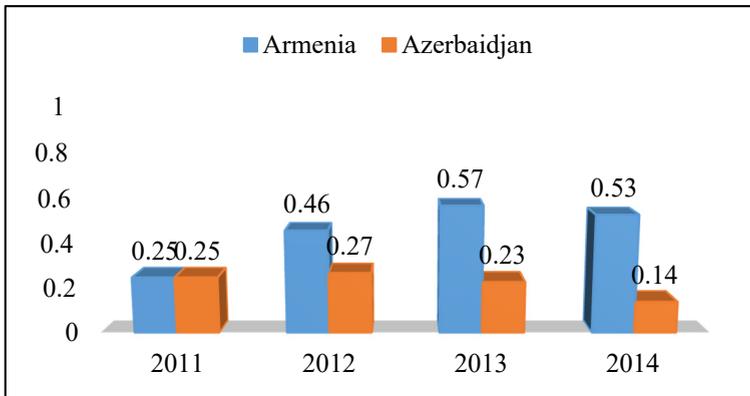
¹⁴ European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2013, International Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundations, [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/European-Integration-Index_2013.pdf], 25 February 2021

The first category in the management dimension is that of the *Coordination Mechanism*, which since 2012 has been modified in the “*Institutional Arrangements for European Integration*”.

Armenia’s results in this category are increasing in the period 2011-2013, having the highest score in 2013 (0.57 out of 1.00) and decreasing in 2014.

Azerbaijan’s score in this category is increasing in 2011-2012 and decreasing in 2013-2014. Starting in 2011 with the same score, in the period 2012-2014, Armenia achieves a better result in the field of coordination mechanism.

Figure 14. **Coordination Mechanism** - Institutional Arrangements for European Integration, Management Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

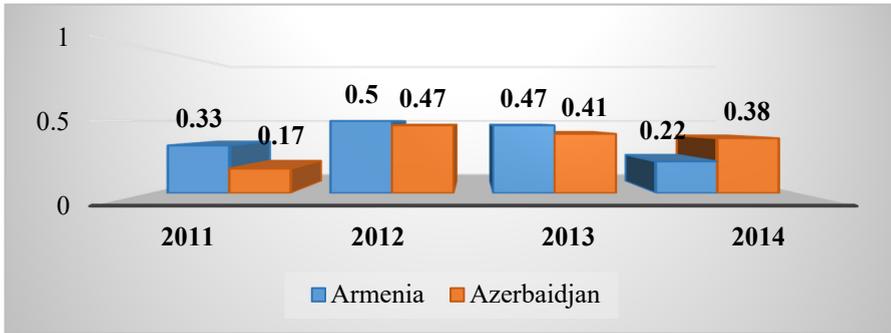
The second category in the management dimension is the *Legal Approximation Mechanism*.

In this compartment, Armenia’s result was increasing in 2011-2012 and decreasing in 2013-2014.

In the case of Azerbaijan, the situation is similar, 2011-2012 increase and 2013-2014 decrease.

If we compare the result of Armenia and Azerbaijan, then we notice that in the first three years (2011-2013) Armenia had a better score, and in 2014, Azerbaijan recorded a higher result.

Figure 15. **Legal Approximation Mechanism**, Management Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan

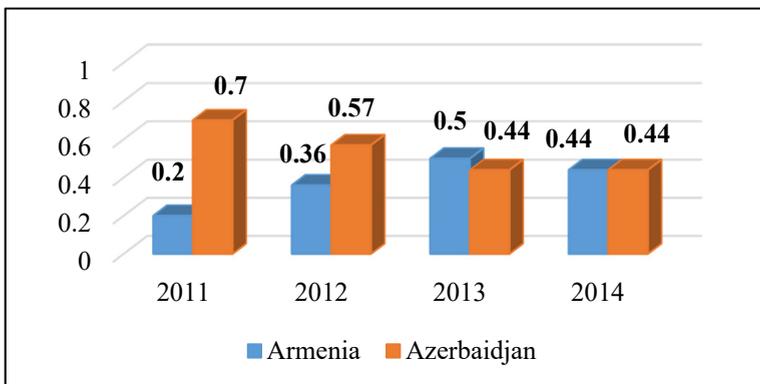


Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The third category in the management dimension is that of *Management of EU Assistance*. In terms of management of EU assistance, Armenia had an increase in 2011-2013 and a decrease in 2014.

As for Azerbaijan, we see a decrease in 2011-2012 and stagnation in 2013-2014.

Figure 16. **Management of EU Assistance**, Management Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



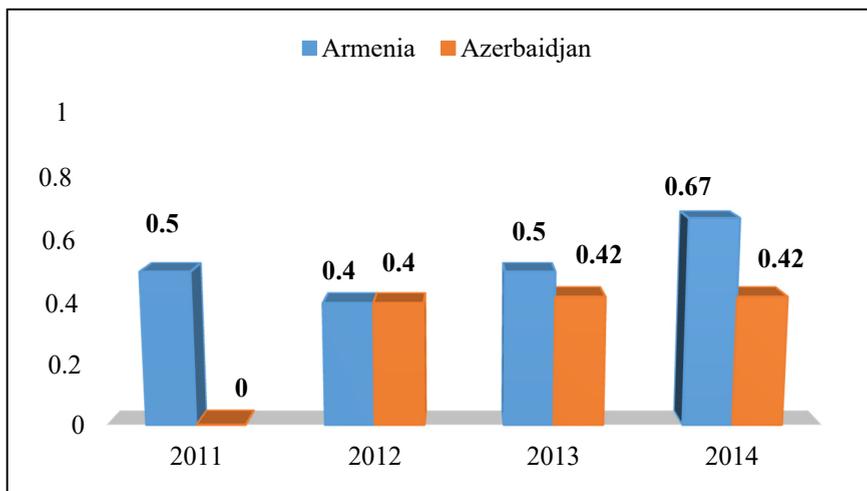
Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

The fourth category in the management dimension is that of *Participation of civil society*.

In terms of civil society participation, Armenia recorded the following evolution – 2011-2012 decrease, 2013-2014 stagnation.

Azerbaijan had a small increase in 2012-2013 and stagnation in 2014.

Figure 17. **Participation of civil society**, Management Dimension– Armenia, Azerbaijan



Source: made by the authors based on data collected from the reports of “European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014”, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 01.03.2021

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can mention that from the beginning Armenia supported the “Eastern Partnership” project and wanted to get closer to the EU and sign the Association Agreement with the EU. However, due to domestic issues and the international situation that arose on the eve of Ukraine’s signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, Armenia refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. During this period Armenia was put in the situation when it had to choose either EU integration or cooperation with Russia. As a result, Armenia joined the Eurasian

Economic Union in 2015, but did not completely give up cooperation with the EU and began a new process of cooperation between Yerevan and Brussels.

Negotiations on a comprehensive and enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia began in 2015. In 2017, the negotiations were completed, and the agreement was initialed in Yerevan. On 1 June 2018, the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia was provisionally implemented.¹⁵ Thus, the Republic of Armenia was the first state in the Eurasian Economic Union to sign the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia was ratified by the Republic of Armenia, all EU Member States, the European Parliament and entered into force on 1 March 2021, which is an important step for EU-Armenia relations. The main objectives of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Armenia are – to strengthen the comprehensive political and economic partnership and cooperation between the Parties; strengthening the basis for political dialogue in all areas of mutual interest; strengthening democracy and political, economic and institutional stability in Armenia; promoting, maintaining and strengthening peace and stability at both regional and international level; cooperation on freedom, security and justice; increasing mobility and interpersonal contacts; supporting Armenia's efforts to develop its economic potential through international cooperation; enhanced trade cooperation; creating the necessary conditions for closer cooperation in other areas of mutual interest.¹⁶

Today, the EU is Armenia's main reform partner. Between 2019 and 2020, the European Union has intensified aid and doubled funding for Armenia to 65 million euros. The EU supports Armenia in its government reform program, private sector development and human capital.

The EU is an important export and import market for Armenia and one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment in the country's economy.

¹⁵ The EU and Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement enters into force, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_782], 20 March 2021.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

Companies in EU Member States are among the largest taxpayers, investors, and employers in Armenia. At the same time, exports increased from EUR 108 million in 2016 to EUR 197 million in 2019. Thus, the EU is the second largest trading partner after Russia, accounting for about 20% of Armenia's total trade.¹⁷

In the case of Azerbaijan, we can mention that the bilateral relations between the EU and Azerbaijan are based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force in 1999. At the same time, in 2017, the EU and Azerbaijan began negotiations on a new framework agreement to give new impetus to mutually beneficial political dialogue and cooperation, given that Azerbaijan is an important energy partner of the EU and plays a key role in delivering Caspian gas to the EU market.¹⁸

In 2018, the EU and Azerbaijan approved joint partnership priorities, which, together with the four priority areas of the Eastern Partnership, will contribute to the development of political dialogue.

On 18 December 2020, representatives of the EU and Azerbaijan met in Brussels for the Partnership Council meeting. Officials discussed the implementation of the EU-Azerbaijan-agreed partnership priorities, the reform agenda in Azerbaijan and the prospects for a new bilateral agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan. The parties also discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh.

During this meeting, the High Representative of the EU, Josep Borrell, stated that "the EU wants to conclude a new comprehensive agreement with Azerbaijan, based on democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that the EU is ready to play a role in supporting and shaping a lasting solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict".¹⁹

¹⁷ Facts and figures about EU – Armenia relations, EU Neighbours portal, [<https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/publications/facts-and-figures-about-eu-armenia-relations-0>], 15 March 2021.

¹⁸ Facts and figures about EU - Azerbaijan relations. European Union External Action Service, [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eap_factsheet_azerbaijan_eng_web.pdf], 01 March 2021.

¹⁹ EU and Azerbaijan discuss bilateral relations in Brussels, EU Neighbours portal, [<https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/eu-and-azerbaijan-discuss-bilateral-relations-brussels>], 20 March 2021.

Participating in the EaP Summit in June 2020, the President of Azerbaijan noted that negotiations on a new partnership agreement with the EU have entered their final phase, and the text of the document has already been agreed by 90% (Azerbaijan plans to start gas supplies to EU in the near future). The new agreement is expected to address political, trade, energy, and other specific issues, including the conditions for the possible establishment of a visa-free travel regime in the future. It will include firm provisions on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.²⁰

It should be noted that the EU is Azerbaijan's main trading partner and accounts for about 37% of the country's total trade (2019), mainly oil exports to the EU (about 5% of total EU imports in the field).

Thus, the EU ranks first in the field of exports and imports from Azerbaijan. At the same time, the EU is a major investor in energy and other sectors of Azerbaijan's economy.²¹ The EU is a major consumer of Azerbaijani oil, transported through the territory of Azerbaijan, and the Southern Gas Corridor project is a strategic initiative to transport gas from the Caspian Sea to the European market. Exports of energy resources from Azerbaijan to the EU are expected to increase further after the completion of the project on the southern gas corridor for the transport of gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe.

However, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a major obstacle to stability and prosperity in the region of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

²⁰ Three Eastern Partnership neighbours in the South Caucasus, [<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/172/three-eastern-partnership-neighbours-in-the-south-caucasus>], 20 March 2021.

²¹ Facts and figures about EU - Azerbaijan relations. European Union External Action Service, [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eap_factsheet_azerbaijan_eng_web.pdf], 01 March 2021.

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