



# policy forum armenia

Better Policies. Better Future.

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## Mission Statement

**Policy Forum Armenia (PFA) is an independent professional non-profit association aimed at strengthening discourse on Armenia's economic development and national security and through that helping to shape public policy in Armenia. Through its activities, the PFA aims to contribute to the creation of an informed public and more effective and accountable government.**

**PFA has a hybrid mission**, operating as a think tank as well as an advocacy group. The PFA provides its membership and general public with a forum for discussion of issues of significance for Armenia and its Diaspora. In addition to offering a platform for alternative views and professional discussions, the PFA—through its research and outreach—intends to provide innovative and practical recommendations that advance the following broad strategic objectives:

- 1 Advocate for development of institutions that promote democracy and strengthen Armenian statehood;
- 2 Educate the public and foster a political culture founded on fair competition, freedom of expression, and tolerance;
- 3 Promote debate over, and help establish the necessary foundations for, sound economic policies to achieve sustainable growth and poverty reduction;
- 4 Help secure a faster and smoother integration of Armenia into the global economy.

**The PFA's main asset is its worldwide network of professionals and leaders** in their respective fields, with dedication to Armenia. With much of its founders and core membership in the USA and its administrative center in Armenia, the PFA unites a world-wide network of members with experience in a wide range of areas of social sciences and economic development. The members are not selected for, or constrained by, any single viewpoint or direction of thought.

*“Nothing is  
more powerful  
than an idea  
whose time  
has come.”*

— Victor Hugo

## Products: The State of the Nation Report

The PFA's most important (and in the interim period the only) product will be the **State of the Nation Report**. Published every 6 months, the Report will provide a critical assessment of processes taking place in Armenia, point out the risks involved, and offer recommendations on key policy issues.<sup>1</sup> The PFA's publications and policy advice have a target audience of the policymaking community and civil society in Armenia, Diaspora, and other stakeholders.

In addition to the Executive Summary, **each Report will include of 4-5 main chapters** on pertinent issues selected from the following broadly-defined categories:

- 1 Economic Policy and Growth
- 2 Social Conditions, Poverty
- 3 Health and Education
- 4 International Relations and Regional Cooperation
- 5 Legal Reform and Governance
- 6 The Rule of Law and Human Rights
- 7 Environment and Use of Resources
- 8 Science and Cultural Affairs
- 9 Diaspora and Pan-Armenian Affairs

**The main body of the Report will be written in a non-technical fashion, easy to digest for the public, the media, and policymakers.** Each chapter of the Report will be drafted by a team of Fellows and Advisers (see section Operational Structure below). The Report will contribute to policy discussions in Armenia and Diaspora through scrutinizing public policies as well as social and economic trends. The Report will take no processes and policies taking place in Armenia and Diaspora as given. Instead, by analyzing trends and comparing them with relevant comparators as well as Armenia's own potential, the Report will shed light on weaknesses and potential risks associated with those trends and policies, as well as highlight their strengths.

Original studies used as background material for the chapters in the Report will be available on the PFA's website and could be published as working papers. The website will also host **professional blogs** of its members, as a way of encouraging more in-depth and frequent discussions about developmental and geopolitical issues of relevance.

**English and Armenian will be the working languages of the PFA.** Attempts will also be made to translate key materials into Russian and French.

«Քննադատել՝  
հոգեպես  
տառապել է  
նշանակում:»

–Գարեգին Նժդեհ

## Operational Strategy

### MODE OF OPERATION

**PFA has a hybrid mission.** It will primarily operate as a think tank, since its output will comprise of expert assessments and analysis using latest social science research methodologies and will benefit from scholarly exchange. In addition, to the extent that the PFA would advocate for, and have impact on, the social change in Armenia and the Diaspora, it would also function as an advocacy organization.

**PFA will follow the model of an organization without walls,** used in a majority of newly created think tanks in the world, largely made possible by the internet revolution. As part of a vast network of Diaspora professionals around the world, the PFA members will be located in different countries in the world but will liaise with each other and with the organization through an administrative center (See Box 1). This model would allow the PFA to function without sizable initial financial resources: the PFA will only cover the marginal cost of research and policy advice it intends to generate, without covering most of the overhead typically associated with these activities. The number of full-time members based in Armenia could increase in the future (e.g., through temporary sabbatical-type leaves, etc.) as financial resources attracted by the PFA grow.

### STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

**The PFA will have a 3-tier membership structure as follows:**

**Tier I:** Advisers—established academics and public policy practitioners with world-wide reputation and recognition for their contributions and work record;

**Tier II:** Senior Fellows—accomplished professionals with Ph.D. in a public policy field (or Masters Degree with at least 7 years of relevant experience) or individuals with a strong record of advocacy/activism.

**Tier III:** Fellows—young professionals with a Masters Degree equivalent (including in progress) and record of advocacy/activism.

Members will be required to contribute to the production of the State of the Nation Report or other functions, including but not limited to fundraising, outreach, and membership drive. They will be required to pay an annual fee.

### STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNING BODIES

The PFA will have a bi-cameral structure to include the Executive Board (EB) and the Academic Board (AB). The EB will be responsible for day-to-day activities of the PFA, including membership, products, outreach, and finance. EB will be comprised of members of all 3 tiers elected for a 2 year period, but for no more than 2 consecutive terms. The AB will consist of Advisers (i.e., Tier I members) and will be the main quality controller of the PFA reports and policy advice. Members of the AB will act in advisory capacity for the EB but will not have executive powers. (See Box 2 for further details).

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful concerned individuals can precipitate change in the world... indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

—MARGARET MEAD  
 cultural anthropologist  
 (1901-78)

## FUNDING

To secure independence and academic/professional integrity, the PFA will seek to diversify its sources of funding. A full-fledged fundraising campaign will likely take off once the organization has completed 1 or 2 semi-annual Reports as a main indicator of progress. In the meantime, a strategy for fundraising will be developed and professional fundraisers will be solicited to prepare for the launch of the fundraising campaign. As indicated above, a membership fee will be instituted.

### Box 1. World-wide Examples

Examples of policy think tanks with a skeleton staff but a vast network of Fellows/Researchers with primary affiliation outside of those think tanks are few and include the following:

**Argentina: The Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth** was founded by young professionals (mostly Harvard graduates) from different fields and political views, committed to working toward a just and developed Argentina.

**United Kingdom: The Foreign Policy Centre** is a UK-based European think tank formed with an objective of developing a vision of a fair and rule-based world order.

**United States: The Independent Institute** aims to redefine the debate over public issues, and foster new and effective directions for government reform.

### Box 2. Structure of the Governing Bodies of the PFA

In addition to the Executive and Academic Boards, the structure will also include the **Ethics Committee**—consisting of select members of both Boards—as the main pillar for dispute resolution (most importantly of academic/policy nature).

The PFA may also enlist the help of **Goodwill Ambassadors**—high-visibility individuals from in- and out-side of the Armenian world (e.g., former high level diplomats and politicians, world class actors, writers, athletes, movie stars, etc.)—to act as spokespersons for the PFA to draw attention of wider masses to its mission and objectives.

In addition to members (i.e., Advisers and Fellows), the

PFA will employ administrative/research staff in its **Yerevan-based Secretariat**. The latter will be the core administrative center of the PFA and the main liaison with stakeholders in Armenia.

All members and staff of the PFA will be governed by the **Rights and Responsibilities** document that will cover issues, such as, administrative responsibilities and oversight, division of labor, admission and separation of members, other relevant administrative rules and procedures.

**The elections to the Executive Board** will be conducted once a year, coinciding in time with one of the semi-annual presentations of the Report.

## Our Vision of Armenia

**We strive to build Armenia as a country and society where:**

**Government** is transparent and fully trusted by its subjects; Its main objective is the current and future well-being of citizens and nationals abroad; Its members are equally accountable before the law in the same manner as any other citizen of the country and have no direct commercial interests.

**Judiciary** is free, fair, and incorruptible.

**Legislature** is competent and respectable.

**Civil service** is the most respected form of employment, because it provides an opportunity to serve the country and people, and is highly professional.

**Society** has high standards of living; It is well educated, tolerant, and humane.

**Economy** is at the frontier of progress and innovation, building upon the human capital of the Nation as a whole; It offers equal opportunities for everyone; It does not tolerate unfair competition and redistributes through efficient and fair taxation.

**Environment** and responsible management of natural resources are essential to the survival of the State, and are key elements of well-being of future generations.

**Human rights** are the most sacred set of values.

**Citizens of Armenia** — Armenians, Yezidis, Greeks, Kurds, Russians, and others alike—are the most valuable asset of the State.

**Armed Forces** are by far the strongest in the region by spirit and dedication of its men and women, by its advanced armament, and by significance of its mission to protect life, history, and culture.

**Diaspora** and Armenia form a single entity, the Nation. Its stake in Armenia and Armenia's development are recognized and encouraged; Its potential is fully internalized; Its members have dual Armenian citizenship.

**History** is of essence.

**Future** is where we aim.



<sup>1</sup> State of the Nation addresses are common in a number of countries (e.g., USA, Mexico, South Africa, Lithuania, Philippines, etc.), while State of the Nation Reports are issued by a variety of civil society groups and organizations internationally.