



**ARMENIAN PUBLISHERS**  
— MEET —  
**TURKISH PUBLISHERS**  
**PROJECT FINAL REPORT**

1 December 2016 – 31 March 2017

## INTRODUCTION

“Armenian Publishers Meet Turkish Publishers” is an EU project conducted by the Turkish Publishers Association with the partnership of Antares Publishing House from 1 December 2016 to 31 March 2017. The project was planned to take the previous Yerevan visit of the TPA executives in 2014 a step further. In this visit, the Armenian Publishers Association and several publishers were met, and a discussion on the ways to develop publishing relations between two countries was initiated.

The main objective of this project was to welcome publishers from Armenia in Turkey, bring them together with the publishers from Turkey to allow new business connections and a fruitful discussion on the potential of and obstacles against publishing trade between two countries. Strengthening the publishing relations and literary bonds will lead to democratic pluralism and social inclusion across and within each society.

In this regard, below publishers from Armenia came to Istanbul to join a 3-days professional program including meetings and visits (22-24 February 2017):

- Arkmenik Nikoghosyan, Book Institute
- Artur Mesropyan, Zangak Publishing House
- Shavarsh Karapetyan, Edit Print Publishing house
- Armen Martirosyan, 1st Literary Agency
- Samvel Gasparyan, Areg publishing house
- Hripsime Madoyan, Antares Publishing House

They participated in a professional meeting on 22 February 2017 at Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus with over 50 participants. They were informed on the facts and figures of Turkish book market, and they presented Armenian book market and their company profiles. On 23 and 24 February 2017, they visited several publishing houses and bookshops selling Turkish and Armenian titles. The program ended with an evaluation meeting at the Hrant Dink Foundation. They met several Turkish publishers in person to have a wider understanding of contemporary Turkish society and culture. Moreover, they had the chance to widen their point of view about the culture and readership of the Armenian community in Turkey during their contact with the Armenian publishers in Istanbul. During the meetings and visits, they had the chance to discuss how to grow publishing trade between two countries and they made copyright agreements about several book titles in Turkish and Armenian.

This report provides a brief overview of the information and recommendations given by the participants during the project activities.

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## KEY FINDINGS

Three major problems were observed against developing copyright and wholesale book trade between Turkey and Armenia: Scarcity of translators, differences between two forms of the Armenian and small market in Armenia.

### Two Forms of Armenian Language

- There are two major forms of Armenian language: Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian. The Armenians in Turkey and in the diaspora speak Western Armenian while the Armenians in the Republic of Armenia, Georgia, and Iran speak Eastern Armenian. Vocabularies of these two forms are very similar, but the grammars and orthographies are completely different. Translating a book into one form of Armenian to the other needs an expertise very few people have.
- These forms of Armenian language bring about different needs which should be discussed and dealt separately:
  - 1) to introduce literature of Armenia (in Eastern Armenian) to the reader of Turkey
  - 2) to protect the Western Armenian (which is at the UNESCO Endangered Languages List).<sup>1</sup>
- There are no Western Armenian translation programs in Turkey, as the language is at risk, this is a very high priority for Turkey and the Armenian population in Turkey. Current translators are retired teachers and their Turkish needs training; the younger translators have a problem with their Armenian. In each case, new translators need to go through a long period of in-house training in the publishing house to have enough expertise. Lack of translators is also reflected on the scarcity of good language teachers in Armenian community schools in Turkey.
- Armenians in Turkey has to focus on keeping their mother tongue alive and direct their translator and editor training and publishing efforts around this urgent mission.
- Spelling is the major problem in editing/redaction processes from Eastern to Western Armenian and vice versa.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>

## **Lack of Translators**

- The number of translators from Turkish to Armenian/Armenian to Turkish is insufficient. Most of them do not earn their living from translating, and they prefer simultaneous translation or better-paid jobs.
- The number of editors that can edit between Eastern and Western Armenian are insufficient.
- Differences between Eastern and Western Armenian is a problem for publishing trade between Turkey and Armenia but this should not be exaggerated and could stop being an obstacle if there are enough number of good translators and editors.
- Yerevan State University has Faculty of Oriental Studies that includes Arabic, Turkish, Iranian and Islamic Studies. There are two programs: Turkish Studies BA (4 years) and Turkish Philology, Osmanic Studies MA (2 years). 60 people graduate annually.<sup>2</sup>
- Kadir Has University Lifelong Learning Centre organizes Armenian Language Courses for free.

## **Small Markets**

- The overall asymmetry between Turkey and Armenia is also reflected on the potential of publishing sectors and the number of readers. The level of Armenian people's interest towards Turkey is not equal to Turkish people's interest towards Armenia. There is little but growing attention in Turkey to Armenia. New projects should be developed to increase this attention mutually, and publishing has a vital role in this mission.
- The major problem for publishing and literature in Armenia is poverty. People don't have enough money to buy books, and therefore the market is too small.
- In Armenia, there is no censorship on books, and the state supports publishing activities to grow the market.
- Translation fees for Turkish-Armenian are very expensive in Armenia. The scarcity of translators prevents competition between them and the possibility of lower fees. They are not satisfied with the payments of the publishing sector.
- Armenian Literature Fund was founded to promote Armenian literature

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.y-su.am/faculties/en/Oriental-Studies>  
<http://www.sci.am/resorgs.php?oid=33&dangid=1>

abroad. It carried out several programs. Several book titles were translated and published to 8 different languages.

- Armenian schools in Turkey teach and order textbooks in Western Armenian from abroad. Therefore, they cannot currently use any textbooks or children books from Armenia.
- Editing and publishing children books from Armenia in Turkey has a special function for Armenian community to inform them about contemporary culture, traditions and life in Armenia.

### **Other Findings**

- There is not enough experience about postal services and book postings between Turkey and Armenia. But there had been some problems and there is an observed risk. This issue should be dealt with in order to make wholesale trade possible.
- To open the borders will normalize the relationships and have benefits for both sides. However, to make this possible, the first step is to create the basis of a cultural familiarity between two societies, the cultural ties should be strengthened.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reason to undertake this assessment is to clarify the interests and priorities for all participants of the project events from Turkey and Armenia. This clarification will allow the TPA and other interested parties to make a thoughtful planning and take solid steps further to develop the relations between publishers in the next term.

### Promoting Translations and Protecting Western Armenian

- Translations of titles from Turkey and Armenia from secondary languages can be a first step and temporary solution for activating the publishing relations.
- The first step to accelerate publishing trade between two countries is increasing the number of translators and of titles translated from Armenian to Turkish.
- New translators for Armenian-Turkish/Turkish-Armenian translations should be trained and specialized.
- Translation workshops could be organized in Turkey and Armenia to support the few existing translators and to motivate and train the candidates. This would not give results in the short term but in medium term number of translators would rise.
- Turkish Studies students of Yerevan State University could be motivated for becoming translators. They can be brought to Turkey to make internships at the publishing houses to gain expertise.
- Translator training programs can be organized in Armenia. TPA can make an announcement to the publishing stakeholders about the application process. The applicants can be trained in Armenian universities with a scholarship. Ministries of Culture and Diaspora can provide free accommodation. They can make their internships in Armenian publishing houses.
- The trainers and trainees of Kadir Has University Eastern Armenian Language Course could be contacted and consulted about possible cooperative activities. A number of these courses can be increased. These students could be supported to gain expertise on Eastern Armenian and become translators.
- Armenia Literature Fund can support translation workshops and translation expenses from Eastern Armenian to Turkish. They should be contacted and informed about this potential.
- Armenian publishers in Turkey should inform the state and universities

about the necessity for new programs/courses on Translation Studies in Western Armenian and make formal requests.

- Translation fund for promoting Turkish literature (TEDA) should support translations to Eastern and Western Armenian.
- Hrant Dink Foundation can support follow-up actions and sustainability of this project in various ways. There is a publication activity in the Foundation. Related publishing houses can support, and an institute can be founded within. Western Armenian courses of the Hrant Dink Foundation, attended by Turks and Armenians with various profiles and for various reasons, can be of benefit to discover and train potential translators. These participants can be directed to this institute.

### **Improving the Publishing Relations**

- Follow-up events including matchmaking sessions and cultural events should be organized in Turkey or Armenia to gather the publishing houses from two countries with high interest and relevant background. These activities should regularly be arranged (annual or biennial).
- A network/platform should be created for Armenian and Turkish publishers, translators and readers to interact.
- Joint publishing projects should be realized. E.g. TPA can be an initiator of such projects by publishing an Armenian-Turkish / Turkish-Armenian dictionary. The same fairy tales, stories can be published in Armenian and Turkish simultaneously by numerous companies from two countries collectively. Children and youth literature can be a good area to start with. Academic books such as biographies of famous Armenian scientists, architects, famous figures, books on Ani cuisine, cognitive books and modern fiction from Armenia and Turkey can attract attention. These projects can be promoted with the help of mobile applications. Promotional activities should be held in two-sides.
- Armenian publishers can be promoted for their participation in the Istanbul Book Fair.





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**TURKISH PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION**

SUPPORT TO THE  
ARMENIA-TURKEY  
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This project takes place within the framework of the Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process programme, funded by the European Union.