



Economic and Social Problems of Armenia in the Programs of the Political Powers Participating in the Parliamentary Elections (According to the results of monitoring)

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE MONITORING

The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, with the support from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, conducted monitoring of election programs of nine political parties and alliances participating in the parliamentary election on April 2, 2017. The goal of the study was to find out what the portion is in those documents that relate to the economic and social problems of the country, and what solutions they offer. As subject of monitoring, the sections relating to those topics have been separated from the general text and have been subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis.

According to the methodology of the monitoring, the economic issues have been divided into the following three categories:

- Economics: industry/agriculture/tourism/IT sector, etc. (current policy and the present situation),
- RA economic strategy (vision),
- Foreign economic relations (EAEU/Russia, EU, Georgia, Iran).

The social topics have been divided in the following four categories:

- employment/unemployment,
- labor rights,
- healthcare,
- pension system/social benefits/return of deposits/assistance to the vulnerable groups.

When doing quantitative analysis, the monitoring group has revealed how much of the text was dedicated to the economic and social topics in each election program. The general text and the respective separate sections have been measured by the number of characters, which have been converted into pages (1800 characters = 1 page), as well as into percents, to introduce their difference in a more pronounced way.

The qualitative analysis of the tackled social and economic topics was conducted by the monitoring group, based on the following standards:

- overall assessment of the present situation,
- revealed problems,
- availability of recommendations and their contents.

Apart from the study of sections relating to the social and economic problems, during the monitoring all the other topics have also been noted, that each political power referred to in their election program. However, according to the methodology, those topics have not been analyzed and are introduced in a listed form.

In the tables reflecting the quantitative data of the monitoring, as well as in the section relating to the contents of the program, we have aligned the sequence of political powers with the list published by the Central Electoral Commission on February 17 of this year, namely: “Yelk” alliance of parties, “Free Democrats” party, “Armenian Revival” party, “Tsarukyan” alliance of parties, “Congress-APP” alliance of parties, Republican Party of Armenia, Armenian Communist Party, “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance of parties, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun” party.

BRIEF SUMMARY

As the results of the study show, the political parties and alliances participating in the parliamentary elections on April 2, 2017, have paid great attention to social and economic problems in their programs. The tables below show that majority of the political parties have dedicated from one to two-thirds of the volume of their programs to the given fields.

Table 1

N	Political parties and alliances	Total volume of the election programs (character/page)	Sections dedicated to social and economic issues (character/page)	Ratio in percentage
1	“Yelk” alliance of parties	22712 character/ 12,6 pages	10142 character/ 5,6 pages	44,65 %
2	“Free Democrats” party	43406 character / 24 pages	15341 character/ 8,5 pages	35,4%
3	“Armenian Revival” party	10664 character / 6 pages	7106 character / 3,9 pages	66,63 %
4	“Tsarukyan” alliance of parties	2370 character / 1,3 pages	2370 character / 1,3 pages	100%
5	“Congress-APP” alliance of parties	13879 character / 7,7 pages	3665 character / 2 pages	26,40%
6	Armenian Republican Party	58996 character/ 32,8 pages	24187 character/ 13,4 pages	41%
7	Armenian Communist Party	23674 character/ 13 pages	17125 character/ 9,5 pages	72,33%
8	“Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance of parties	52548 character/ 29 pages	12570 character/ 7 pages	23,92%
9	Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun	17867 character/ 10 pages	7892 character/ 4,4 pages	44,17%

In terms of percentage, the index of “Tsarukyan” alliance is the highest – the election document consisting of 15 points is fully dedicated to the social-economic issues. However, the program of the “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance, in this respect having the lowest index, by absolute figures (amount of characters/pages) of the volume of sections dedicated to the same topics, is five times more than “the 15 points” by the Tsarukyan alliance. In general, of nine political powers, the election program of the ORO is the most extensive – 29 pages; and only the program of the Republican Party exceeds it – almost 33 pages. In terms of the number of pages (characters) dedicated to social and economic issues, the RPA is a leader, too, but in terms of ratio between the overall volume of the program and the mentioned sections, the ruling party is behind its five competitors – “Tsarukyan” alliance, Communist party, “Armenian Revival”, “Yelk” and “ARFD”.

In the previous table we showed how much of the election program by each political party is dedicated to the social-economic issues in general. In the table below, we introduce the volume of sections related to economic and social issues separately, and their ratio by percentage.

Table 2

N	Political parties and alliances	The volume dedicated to economic issues (character/page)	The volume dedicated to social issues (character/page)	Ratio in percentage (%)
1	“Yelk” alliance of parties	6134 character/ 3,4 pages	4008 character/ 2,2 pages	60,48% / 39,52%
2	“Free Democrats” party	11716 character / 6,5 pages	3625 character/ 2 pages	76,37%/ 23,63%
3	“Armenian Revival” party	4203 character / 2,3 pages	2903 character / 1,6 pages	59,15% / 40,85%
4	“Tsarukyan” alliance of parties	883 character / 0,5 pages	1487 character / 0,8 pages	37,26% / 62,74%
5	“Congress-APP” alliance of parties	2571 character / 1,4 pages	1094 character / 0,6 pages	70,15% / 29,85%
6	Armenian Republican Party	14825 character/ 8,2 pages	9362 character / 5,2 pages	61,29% / 38,71
7	Armenian Communist Party	11963 character/ 6,6 pages	5162 character / 2,9 pages	69,86% / 30,14%
8	“Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance of parties	7711 character / 4,3 pages	4859 character / 2,7 pages	61,34% / 38,66%
9	Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun	4699 character/ 2,6 pages	3193 character / 1,8 pages	59,54% / 40,46%

As the figures in the table show, in their election programs almost all the political parties have paid more attention to economic than social topics (the only exception is “Tsarukyan” alliance, in its “15 points” the social component is prevailing). This approach by the majority of the political parties and alliances participating in the elections enables us to assume that they are planning to solve the social problems through removing the economy from crisis first.

Nevertheless, when studying the contents of the programs, the monitoring group noted that when tackling upon both the economic and social problems none of the political parties managed to avoid purely declarative provisions, including in the sections where specific calculations and substantiations are required. As a result, it is not clear to the voter at the expense of what and how the current problems will be solved and the important goals be achieved.

Below we introduce what economic and social problems are raised by each party and alliance in the election program and what solutions they offer.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTION ACCORDING TO THE POLITICAL POWERS

How do the political parties and alliances participating in the parliamentary elections assess the condition of industry, agriculture, trade and economy and other sectors? What vision do they have in terms of their development strategy? Which of the foreign economic relations are priority, and which need additional promotion? In what condition is the social aspect, and what is recommended to improve it? How will the unemployment be reduced, and how the labor right

will be protected? What is recommended to improve the systems of healthcare development, pensions and social transfers? When monitoring the election programs, these are the topics that mainly became the subject for study.

To provide comprehensive information about the social-economic sections in the programs of each party and alliance participating in the elections, here we introduce both their contents and more detailed quantitative data. As it was mentioned the sequence of the political parties is in accord with the CEC list.

“YELK” ALLIANCE OF PARTIES

Election program of “Yelk” alliance is 22712 characters, which is equal to 12,6 pages.

In the election program, the sections related to economic issues make 6134 characters, which is equal to 3.4 pages and makes 27% of the total program.

In the election program, the sections related to social issues make 4008 characters, which is equal to 2.2 pages and makes 17.65% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program the sections relating to social and economic issues make 44.65% of the total program.

Besides the economic and social issues, the following thematic sections are also included in the program of “Yelk”: “Armed forces”, “Foreign policy”, “The means to double the population in Armenia within the shortest period is the Great repatriation”, “Combating corruption”, “Education and science”, “Environment”, “Exclusion of political pursuit”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

In case of receiving the votes to be in power after elections, the “Yelk” alliance envisages to make Armenia into a country of technological industry. In the election program, the alliance has introduced its vision of solving the problems. In particular, it is envisaged that a number of companies, production industries will be exempt from VAT, customs dues and property tax. They include importers of production lines and auxiliary equipment, importers and dealers of cars running on electricity, companies making alternative energy, as well as those having 150 and more employees in the field of information technology. Procurement from the Armenian producers for the army will increase by at least two percent of the annual defense budget. The production of necessary parts of military equipment of the RA Armed forces will be organized in Armenia.

“Yelk” alliance considers heavy industry as a means of eliminating unemployment and adding direct taxes into the budget. Priority will be given to color metallurgy and chemical industry. Soft conditions will be created to establish a smeltery in Syunik marz. Through attracting interested parties, within a short period the Kapan railway station will be connected to the Julfa railway station in Iran thus contributing to the extraction. The prices for electricity and gas will be reduced by 10-15% through development of renewable energy and import of alternative energy sources.

The alliance intends to eliminate artificial monopolies. The level transparency of public procurement will be increased and the grounds for single-source procurement will be limited by

law. Armenia's external debt will be audited; the effectiveness of the loan expenditures will be studied to identify possible abuses, i.e. the guilty.

To unload Yerevan and to ensure harmonious territorial development, the alliance recommends setting up a system of taxes according to the zones, which would be attractive for the businesses.

“Yelk” considers Armenia's membership in EAEU a political mistake, which contains the most serious risks for the economic development as well. When making a decision on joining other international and interstate structures, the alliance will be guided by Armenia's priority interest.

In the field of agriculture, the alliance envisages that the agricultural household, which would pass on to the drip irrigation system, will be exempt from paying for the irrigation water for five years. The state will encourage creation of agricultural line associations, which would deal with protecting the interests of the peasant guilds and organization of wholesale supplies. Experimental centers will be established for the production of exclusively organic products. The process for creating small water-reservoirs will be launched. An electronic platform will be created through which agricultural products producers and consumers will be able to agree on buying and selling. Those who import and sell factory-made agricultural machinery of up to two years old, will be exempt from the customs due and VAT.

In the field of small and medium enterprises, companies having up to 500 million AMD turnover will be taxed in a differentiated three-level turnover tax. Moreover, a choice will be provided to operate either under turnover tax or VAT. An SME advocacy, i.e. business ombudsman's institute will be introduced, which would have wide range of powers. The control prices for customs clearance will be eliminated and the actual invoices will be taken into consideration, as well as information about the price of the given commodity available on the Internet.

In the field of transport, first of all the institute of the national carrier will be introduced, which would be an airline company with a state-owned share, and its routine operation will be considered as a national security issue. Anti-monopoly measures will be taken aimed at making free market for aviation fuel, thus ensuring reduction in prices of air tickets and increasing the flow of tourists to Armenia.

The practice of posing a fine for the violation of traffic rules registered by the speed cameras and CCTVs will be stopped. At least 10mln dollars per year will be invested in the further development of the Yerevan metro. Iran-Armenia railway will be built, while considering the stage-by-stage implementation of the project.

SOCIAL ASPECT

In the “RA Armed forces” section of election program the “Yelk” alliance attached importance to the servicepersons' social welfare and health issues, and as a solution they recommend setting the housing for military officers as a state priority and at least to triple its pace; to discuss the opportunity of using the funds given to officers as reimbursement for rented apartments as mortgage. Former enlisted servicepersons, who gained health issues, will be provided with necessary services.

As a result of studies, the alliance envisages to create a map of social conditions for all the school-children in Armenia, based on which additional funds will be provided to huge amount of needy pupils and schools having performance problems. Formation of teachers' joint trade union movement will be encouraged, as well, which would protect their interests. According to the

program of the alliance, during the coming five years budget allocations to the general education will be doubled, which would result in increasing the teachers' wages.

The alliance envisages creating a center for support of people with disability, which would help all those with disability at all stages to get quality and available education while providing professional and technical assistance to the students and the academy. An agency will also be established which will deal with the issues of protecting the rights of people with disability. "Yelk" also attached importance to the issues of organizing the further life of children who leave orphanages, and recommends establishing a body providing social-psychological support.

As a result of increasing the state budget revenue, the alliance promises to increase by 20% the wages of budgetary institutions and the pensions. The state governing system will also be optimized and due to that, wages of the public sector will be brought to the level of private sector, thus defining a common 20% for the income tax for all. "Yelk" envisages to cancel the mandatory component of the accumulative pension system, instead initiating the establishment of a pension system formed on voluntary basis.

In the field of healthcare, "Yelk" alliance recommends allocating the funds for state-order (free of charge) treatment not to the hospitals, but (in the form of certificate) to the patients who are eligible for state-ordered treatment, which would enable getting the treatment in a preferred hospital. It is envisaged to do health examination of all citizens in RA with the purpose of creating a relevant database, including mandatory regular examination of the risk groups. "Yelk" promises to double the budgetary funds for healthcare during the next five years.

The alliance envisages to double the amount of one-time monetary assistance for the delivery of the third and fourth child, and to triple it in case of the fifth and sixth child.

"FREE DEMOCRATS" PARTY

The election program of the "Free Democrats" party makes 43406 characters, which is equal to 24 pages.

In the election program, the sections related to economic issues make 11716 characters, which is equal to 6.5 pages and makes 27% of the total program.

In the election program, the sections related to social issues make 3625 characters, which is equal to 2 pages and makes 8.34% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program of the "Free Democrats" party, the sections relating to social and economic issues make 35.34% of the total program.

In the election program, besides the sections relating to economic and social problems, the following thematic sections are also included: "Sovereign, democratic and modern Armenia", "Diversified foreign policy based on the national interest", "Establish dignified peace with neighbors and not "beg", "Free, democratic and integrated Artsakh", "Establishing legality and rule of law", "Defence and modernization of the army", "Advanced science for security and sovereignty", "Art and culture promoting Armenia and introducing it in a dignified manner", "Quality and available general education as a safeguard for national security".

In the introduction part of its election program, the “Free Democrats” party noted that poverty and unemployment level, economic, political and social regress in the country are threatening.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

The party titled this section as “Priorities of the policy of the competitive economy”. The “Free Democrats” link the development of Armenia’s economy with the new contract to be signed with the EU, while offering to make it more comprehensive through including the component of creating a free trade zone, visa facilitation, as well as signing the agreement for Common European aviation space, becoming a member of European energy community.

The party recommends enhancing cooperation with the USA in trade-economic, energy and other aspects, even signing the strategic partnership charter. It also attaches importance to signing a free trade agreement with Iran, in particular negotiating around the new contract for importing gas to reduce dependence on the Russian gas and to eliminate the monopoly. The “Free Democrats” recommend that the capital owned by the Diaspora (according to various calculations it is 440-450bln US dollars) be directed to the Armenian economy through a sovereign investment fund. The party envisages putting the operation and development of the most important infrastructural entities at the bases of the economic policy of the government. The “Free Democrats” intends to implement diversified tax and promoting budgetary policy, redistribution of the tax load while significantly reducing the load of the small and medium businesses, defining diversified tariffs for the profit tax for the producing enterprises, decreasing the business dues. According to the party, the state’s tax benefits and subsidizing policy should first be directed towards (besides the IT sector) pharmacology, innovation and hi technology products, military equipment, basic elements of non-traditional energy, agricultural products and food production and export.

The “Free Democrats” also recommends that in 2017-2021 at least two dozens of innovative centers, technoparks and laboratories be established in Armenia and Artsakh; to set up business support centers in the marzes.

For the progress of the agricultural sector, the party recommends defining by law what the peasants’, farmers’ households and agricultural enterprises are, while differentiating them and enabling them to use the offered diversified and stimulating policies. Free democrats consider it necessary to subsidize the production of agricultural products, and to combine it with the policy of guaranteed prices for processing in mountainous rural areas; to encourage development of small peasant households, to combat ownership of big plots of land, to establish co-operatives for mutual support in the fields of realization of agricultural products and funding agricultural activities, to reform the irrigation system.

According to the description by the “Free Democrats”, the systemic nature of corruption and the huge size of shade economy, political and economic monopoly threaten the bases of statehood and close the prospects of country development. “As a way out, it is recommended to introduce effective, transparent and accountable systems of governance. It is envisaged to eliminate the shade economy, thus increasing the budgetary income from 600mln up to 1bln US dollars, which means that budget expenditures per capita might increase by 200-300 US dollars, or by 600-1200 US dollars calculated for an average family. In case of effectively combating corruption and shade economy, and due to that, entering additional funds into the state budget, it would be possible at least to double the expenditures in the field of defence and healthcare. Free democrats consider it necessary to review the procurement process in the field of defence and make it maximum controllable, while excluding corrupt transactions, embezzlements and speculations.”

In case of receiving the respective vote of trust in the elections, the party promises to eliminate monopolies and oligopolies, while discriminating state authority from business, stopping state discriminatory and protectionist policy, returning the property obtained through violation of the law, and making the legislation about economic competitiveness stricter. Free democrats also intend to inventory and to set quotas on subsoil management, to introduce effective, economical and transparent systems of using water, mining and other natural resources through cooperation with international and European structures.

According to the party, the provisions of the Armenia-Russia gas contract need to be replenished with such regulations, which would make it mandatory for the “Gazprom” to transport and transit the Iranian gas via the gas pipeline belonging to them.

The party is convinced, that membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), with its vague prospects, created impediments for Armenia. Free democrats suggest stopping Armenia’s membership in the EAEU considering that it not only failed to ensure and it cannot ensure economic development and strengthening security that was promised, but it also aggravated the country indexes in all sectors, including RA foreign trade turnover, which has terribly decreased. As compared with 2014, in 2016 the import has reduced by 28%. During the same period export has increased by 16%, which, however, is not a result of strengthening Armenia’s trade positions and development of Armenian production, but simple re-export of commodities imported to Armenia from Turkey. The party is convinced that if the “Turkish part” is removed from the volume of export, one can state that it has reduced as well. Instead, Armenia’s state debt has increased: two years ago, it was 4.4bln US dollars, now it has increased by 26% and has reached 5.6bln US dollars.

Free democrats are convinced that European integration should become a priority for Armenia, and membership in the European Union should become a strategic vision and a vital need.

SOCIAL ASPECT

The motto of the “Free Democrats” party for the social policy is: “A safe person and family, youth with prospect and socially united Armenia”. According to “Free Democrats”, this policy should be human-centered and for a human, it should reflect the interests of the citizen and the public, thanks to which it will be possible to ensure social solidarity, to reduce poverty significantly and to exclude over-centralization of wealth.

In 2017-2021, the party intends to reduce the unemployment level of 2016 from 16.9% to 10.4% in 2021, which is equal to creating 140000 work places. In case of assuming the power, the free democrats promise to double the minimum salary within five years to reach AMD111000, to increase the average salary to AMD259000, and the average labor pension – up to AMD73.000. During the 2017-2021, the current index of general poverty will be reduced from 30% at least to 15%, and the number of extremely poor people will make not more than 2%.

“Free Democrats” recommend introducing a model of social solidarity in the country, which supposes a chance of free mobility for the population from one social group to the other, maintaining a normative link between the different types of income, increase in self-employment, solidarity among the generations, equal assessment of various professions and proportional territorial development. According to the party, in case of dismissing from work, the duration of allowance paid by the employer should be set minimum three months, and for certain types of jobs it should be six months.

In the program of the “Free Democrats” it is intended that the one-time monetary allowance for a child delivery be set AMD 1.5mln; for the third and fourth child – AMD 2mln; and starting with the fifth child – AMD 3mln. The length of paid vacation for mothers should be increased significantly – by 30-50%, and to give such an opportunity to fathers as well.

The party considers it necessary to provide practical opportunities for youth to get quality education, establish a family, and find a job, for personal self-fulfillment and demonstrating creative potential in all aspects of life. Free democrats intend to ensure healthy social environment for a person, while making more stringent the environmental legislation and, civil and public oversight, as well as to create proper conditions and opportunities for schoolchildren, youth and the public in general to lead a healthy life-style, to have safe food, active sports life, and for full integration and personal self-fulfillment.

Through the reduction of shade economy, the party recommends doubling expenditures in the field of defence, including enhancement of social benefits and availability of vital public services for servicepersons and participants in the Artsakh liberation war. At the same time, it is recommended to increase by 20% the wage of teachers defined by the RA Government decree on “Strategy for high schools”.

In its program, the “Free Democrats” party expressed confidence that Armenia’s place is in the Pan-European family, and such a state should be built where a person has a dignified and wealthy life, job and elderly life.

“ARMENIAN REVIVAL” PARTY

“Armenian Revival” party proposes 30 steps in its election program, which will change Armenia. In total, the document contains 10664 characters, which is equal to almost six pages.

In the election program, the sections related to economic issues make 4203 characters, which is equal to 2.3 pages and makes 39.41% of the total program.

In the election program, the sections related to social issues make 2903 characters, which is equal to 1.6 pages and makes 27.22% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program the sections relating to social and economic issues make 66.63% of the total program.

Besides the economic and social issues, the “Armenian Revival” party also included the following topics in the program: combating corruption, rule of law, transition to a professional and paid army, introduction of the probation service, increasing financing of education and science, increasing state support to culture and sports, strengthening the trinity Armenia-Diaspora-Artsakh, ensuring identity and political participation of national minorities.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

To change the economic development, the party recommends participating in the big regional programs and taking practical steps by the state to attract funds from international financial institutions and interested states to lay Iran-Armenia-Georgia oil pipeline, Iran-Armenia-Georgia

gas pipeline, Armenia-Iran water canal, Iran-Armenia railway and to construct a modern oil factory in Armenia.

“Armenian Revival” attaches importance to the consistent development and diversification of energy capacities, based on the example of Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Russia energy system development. The party considers important the construction of the new nuclear energy block, waste-processing factories, the introduction of modern technologies to apply alternative energy sources, as well as drafting and implementation of a policy for producing and supplying equipment in the market.

In its election program, the Armenian Revival Party recommends creating or restarting 20 huge industrial enterprises, developing information technology and military industry sector while defining civilized mechanisms for tax and customs benefits, modernizing control of the state borders with domestically produced equipment, suspending the bankruptcy process of “Nairit” and “Vanadzor ckimprom”, drafting strategic program for their restarting, and to announce an international investment tender.

The Armenian Revival party highlights the need for consistent development of small and medium entrepreneurship, provision of low rate production and agricultural loans. It is envisaged to define and provide tax benefits to these enterprises in the bordering regions, in the disaster zone; enterprises and entrepreneurs having up to AMD 18mln annual commodity turnover will be exempt from taxes for three years.

The Armenian Revival party also recommends further simplification of tax and customs administration, full introduction of an electronic system, elimination of control prices, adoption of a law limiting the increase of the state debt threshold, strengthening supervision over the loan expenditures.

In settlement that suffered from the 1988 earthquake, as well as in borderline zone the ARP intends to provide tax benefits; newly established production enterprises will be exempt from tax for three years.

The ARP expresses confidence that state supervision over the subsoil and natural resources should be strengthened, in particular via limiting participation of companies registered offshore in the extraction industry programs. In relation to this, it recommends increasing the payment of defined AMD600 per ton of ore to replenish the state budget.

The party highlights the necessity to introduce a civilized system of agricultural insurance to provide guaranteed financial support to rural residents; it also attaches importance to the state support to the food processing enterprises, and introduction of a system for development of family businesses in agricultural sector and development of cooperatives.

SOCIAL ASPECT

In the provisions relating to social sector in the election program of the “Armenian revival” party, one of the primary issues is the full return of deposits, including reimbursement of deposits to the depositors’ heirs, as well as reform in the cumulative pension system, while applying the principle of its being voluntary.

In terms of obtaining apartments through mortgage loans, the ARP recommends eliminating the downpayment, while ensuring 20-30-year loan mechanisms with low interest rates for young families and subsidizing from the state funds; and for the socially vulnerable groups they offer developing and implementing long-term and short-term housing programs through state and targeted programs.

In the field of healthcare insurance, the party intends to replace the system of state order (free of charge), which was the reason for a number of speculations and corruption risks, with addressed monetary certificates and providing them to all the needy citizens. In terms of diseases and surgeries prevailing in the country, it proposes introduction of guaranteed state support mechanisms, continuous increase of the medical personnel's wages and their indexation.

According to the ARP program, each marrying couple should receive a one-time AMD500.000 support from the state budget, while giving the preference to socially vulnerable groups, as well as it intends to increase the amount allocated for the new-born; to create mechanisms of state support to large families.

The party intends to do indexation and increase the pension of more than 200000 disabled persons, provide tax benefits to enterprises established by the disabled or companies having disabled employees, as well as to create a public body attached to the government, which will deal the issues of the disabled.

The ARP considers it necessary to increase and do indexation of the minimum salary every year, bringing it to AMD100000 in the coming years; and the pensions should reach the level of minimum consumer goods basket.

The party also recommends minimizing the tariffs of the utility services, to free the market of services provided to the population, to reform radically the system of condominiums, and to eliminate the gas service payment.

The ARP attaches importance to the elimination of the vicious system of speed cameras and "red lines", and to define AMD1000 as maximum for the security of the traffic.

The party intends to form a network of free kindergartens in the RA marzes, to define mechanisms to safeguard free education for socially vulnerable families, to provide monetary educational certificates instead of state order education.

In the election provisions the ARP also referred to the issue of full integration of Syrian Armenians, the forcefully deported from Azerbaijan, persons having the status of a refugee into the society, while proposing creation of civilized mechanisms.

"TSARUKYAN" ALLIANCE OF PARTIES

The volume of the document named "15 priority steps by "Tsarukyan" alliance" introduced as an election program contains 2370 characters, which is equal to 1.3 pages.

In that document, the sections related to economic issues make 883 characters, which is equal to 0.5 pages and makes 37.26% of the total program.

The sections related to social issues make 1487 characters, which is equal to 0.8 pages and makes 62.74% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program is fully, by 100%, dedicated to social and economic issues.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

Seven of the 15 priority steps by the "Tsarukyan" alliance relate to the solution of economic problems. It is envisaged to exempt the small and medium enterprises from taxes during the

coming three years; and during the coming five years, economic operators having up to AMD 30mln turnover, will be exempt from taxes, including the obligation of getting registered as an Entrepreneur or a legal person at the state registrar's office. In terms of AMD 60bln fines and penalties accumulated as a result of failing to fulfill tax obligations, the alliance proposes to apply tax amnesty.

According to the alliance, to improve the agricultural sector, it is necessary that the state give loans and encourage individuals and companies dealing with agricultural production. The interest rate of agricultural loans should not exceed 3-5%. Annual fee for the irrigation of one hectare land is envisaged to be AMD 1000 for the farms.

In the customs sector, the "Tsarukyan" alliance proposes to eliminate the usage of "controllers", and in the mining industry to review the mechanism of calculating and payment of fees for using resources in favor of the state budget.

SOCIAL ASPECT

Eight of the priority steps of the "Tsarukyan" alliance relate to the solving of social problems. In particular, it is envisaged that the size of pension will be aligned with the minimum consumer goods basket, to increase it by AMD 25000 and to do regular indexation, and starting January 1, 2018, to set the minimum salary as AMD80000.

The alliance considers it necessary to freeze the cumulative pension system, which is full of public discontent, and with the annual AMD 28-30bln spent on it from the state budget, the pension can be increased, and the citizens' deposits can be returned.

According to the alliance, the existing tariffs for gas and electricity should be significantly reduced. Substantiations are as follows: on the border, Armenia receives 1000 m³ gas for USD150, and the final consumer, including the population receives it for at least twice as higher price. As far as electricity is concerned, the average cost price for 1Kwph energy produced by the HPPs is AMD 2-5, and the electric energy produced by the NPP is AMD 5-7 per 1Kwph.

Referring to the healthcare sector, the alliance proposes to change the state order system radically: to provide certificates to the socially vulnerable groups, servicepersons and defined by the law stakeholders, and to certify the state order system completely.

The election document states, "no student with high performance should be deprived from the right to education because of not paying the tuition fee."

The "Tsarukyan" alliance also promised that the first decree of the new government formed by them will be elimination of speed cameras and "red lines."

"CONGRESS-APP" ALLIANCE OF PARTIES

The election program of "Congress-APP" is 13879 characters, which is equal to 7.7pages.

The sections related to economic issues make 2571 characters, which is equal to 1.4 pages and makes 18.52% of the total program.

The sections related to social issues make 1094 characters, which is equal to 0.6 pages and makes 7.88% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program the sections related to social and economic issues make 26.40% of the total program.

Besides the social and economic issues, the following topical sections are also in the election program: “Peace, reconciliation, good neighborly relations”, “The state as a tool for development”, “Security and foreign policy”, “Science, education, technologies, culture”, “Freedom and democracy”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

In the election program of the “Congress-APP” alliance, the section relating to the economic issues starts with this idea: “Apply Article 20 of the UN convention on combating corruption retroactively since 1991, and return to the budget all the illegal proceeds.”

To establish free and equal competition, to combat monopolies and oligopolies effectively, the alliance proposes to define for companies a maximum threshold of 33% share in the market, while stating that the limitation shall apply to markets for wide range of consumer products, and it will cover other markets by law.

The alliance intends to put the ideology of increasing investment attractiveness, promoting business and enhancement of tax base at the bases of the tax and customs policy. For that purpose, it is considered necessary to fully simplify the tax and customs system, to reduce the number of taxes from 15 to 6 (profit tax, income tax, excise tax, value added tax, local tax as well as customs due). Moreover, it is intended to apply turnover tax only as a replacing tax, the tax rate for profit tax, income tax and value added tax to be set 15%, as well as to lift levying the value add tax at the border zone.

The alliance also proposes to calculate the customs dues for imported commodities exclusively based on the price in the invoice, and the burden of proof of that document being false is on the state.

In terms of encouraging investments, the alliance considers it necessary to do the following: the companies that have invested from 1-5mln US dollars should be exempt from profit tax for two years; and the companies that made investment of more than 5mln US dollars – for five years. Moreover, the same approach should be applied in case of the re-invested profit; the innovative business should be exempt from profit tax during the first two years on the condition of paying that money to the state budget during the following five years.

The alliance makes a proposal to reduce the tariffs for gas and electricity by 25%, through changing the methodology of setting the tariff and cutting down ineffective expenditures and losses. It is envisaged to reduce significantly Armenia’s energy dependence on gas and other hydrocarbon fuel, while encouraging development of alternative energy, in particular providing loans for the production of solar panels and their obtaining by the consumers.

In terms of monetary policy, the “Congress-APP” states that it should exclude artificial value of the Armenian dram, and be aimed at encouraging export. For the farms that happened to be in difficult situation, the alliance recommends applying loan amnesty, nullifying the fines-penalties for farm loans, writing off or partial redemption of debts by farms. Besides, it is considered necessary to establish an insurance company with the state support, which will protect agriculture from frostbites, hail and other natural disasters.

In its election program the alliance envisages to examine the legality of transactions related to the sale of shares of “Nairit” factory during 2006-2012, to restore damage caused to the factory

and the state, to charge those to blame for embezzlements and speculations, to develop a new program for restarting “Nairit”.

“Congress-APP” attaches importance to making capital investments in the development of tourism infrastructures in the amount of at least 2% of the annual GDP.

SOCIAL ASPECT

In the provisions related to this sector, “Congress-APP” alliance envisaged to bring the average pension to the level of minimum consumer goods basket (AMD 55000) within one year, to bring the minimum pension to the same level within three years, and within five years to bring the average size of pension close to 40% of average salary.

The alliance considers it necessary to allocate at least 3% of the GDP from the state budget to healthcare; to introduce a universal medical insurance system.

“Congress-APP” proposes to increase significantly the salary of servicepersons, officers and non-commissioned officer in the RA Armed forces, to replace the existing practice of “15 days service, 15 days rest” with a “7 days service, 7 days rest” mode.

Referring to the bank deposits by the USSR citizens, the alliance recommends the following solution: to formalize them as a state bond and redeem them twice as much and twice as faster than what is stipulated by the existing law.

In its provision of the program, the alliance also envisages to eliminate the system of mandatory cumulative pension, and to reduce the fines for traffic rule violations at least twice.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF ARMENIA

The election program of the Republican Party of Armenia is 58996 characters, which is equal to 32.8 pages.

The sections related to economic issues make 14825 characters, which is equal to 8.2 pages and makes 25.13% of the total program.

The sections related to social issues make 9362 characters, which is equal to 5.2 pages and makes 15.87% of the total program.

Thus, in the election program the sections related to social and economic issues make 41% of the total program.

Besides the economic and social issues, the election program of the Republican party also includes the following thematic sections: “Armenian army”, “Republic of Artsakh”, “Foreign policy”, “Diaspora”, “Implementation of constitutional amendments”, “State governing system”, “Territorial administration and local self-government”, “Justice, combating corruption”, “Education and science”, “Culture”, “Nature protection” and “Youth and sports”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

In its election program, the Republican party of Armenia allocated more than a quarter of the program to the economy of Armenia, titling it “Economic progress”. The Republicans promise continuous and tangible for everyone reforms in the economy, in the tax and customs sectors. Ensuring macroeconomic sustainability, improvement of investment environment and attracting new investments, as well as providing assistance to the economic operators and economic motivations are on the first line of the agenda for the economic policy. In all these cases, the RPA highlights provision of equal competitive conditions in the economic life and elimination of protectionism.

Irrespective of the progress registered by the international organizations assessing the business environment, in its election program the Republican Party highlights the following problems: there is unequal application by administration bodies of requirements stipulated in the law, effectiveness of the judicial system is quite low in case of administrative and economic disputes, as well as in cases of protecting intellectual property rights; participation of small and medium businesses in the GDP is little, continuity risks of business programs are high. As solutions, they recommend transition from the risk-containing business environment to such an environment where the state regulations have proportionate and equal application, sustainability and predictability, and the business disputes are settled by the principle of justice.

The Republican Party highlights the current insufficient level of foreign investments. Here, as priority problems to be solved are mentioned the following: increasing protection of investments and the level of trust towards them; formation of additional opportunities to implement them; increasing the level of recognizing Armenia as a safe and profitable place. The steps to achieve these objectives are – to create an investment fund, based on the international best practice to introduce the effective model of “state-private sector partnership” in Armenia.

The Republican Party connects promotion of economic growth with the export process. Armenia, being a country with a small internal market, should build its development model. The problem is that the export has insufficient specific weight in the GDP. In terms of markets, as well as the types of exported commodities, the high degree of export centralization is challenging. The volume of exported commodities to neighboring countries is insufficient. The Republican Party sees the solution of the problem in transition from the narrow oriented export economy to a diversified economy provided with export promoting infrastructures, and quickly responding to the requirements of the neighboring markets. The export should be the main impetus for the economic development having at least 40-45% of specific weight in the GDP.

The problems of the country’s infrastructures are: insufficient level of state regulation of transport and road assets, absence of a modern management system for passenger transportation, insufficient level of promoting programs and measures in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, the need to increase the quality of services provided in the sector the supplying drinking water, limited amounts of flights from the country. The envisaged solutions – to develop and implement a five-year (2017-2021) road security program for the Republic of Armenia, to import a new system for road assets management, implement comprehensive measures for speedy development of information communication technologies, to ensure free and competitive conditions for the airline companies, through using trade opportunities with Iran and Georgia to implement transition to a new, modern electric energy market, to improve the quality of services provided in the field of supplying drinking water.

The current agricultural problems are: very low pace of establishing a strata of modern farmers, insufficient prevalence of intensive agriculture and advanced technologies, low level of

agricultural machinery, low effectiveness of the subsidizing mechanisms, ineffective system of realization of agricultural products, availability of unused agricultural lands, low level of farm cooperation, outdated loans of the businesses. As a result, businesses with low production are not able to provide sufficient living standards. The envisaged solutions are: increase the level of targeted use of agricultural lands; annually establish up to 100 hectares of orchards; increase the availability of loans to agriculture; implement a program of improving pedigree features of agricultural animals; provide available mechanisms for updating the agricultural technology; to implement pilot programs of introducing an insurance system; with the purpose of producing quality wine, to establish technical specifications of requirements and acceptable wine making methods and developments. High importance will be attached to the food safety issues.

Problems in the field of tourism: Armenia is not yet well-known in the global market as a tourism country; tourism infrastructures are not sufficiently developed, so tourism does not have its participation in the economy with the true potential that it has. The goal is to increase continuously Armenia's and Armenian tourism competitiveness in the global market, to ensure growth in the number of tourists and their proportionate distribution in the country. Some solutions propose effective marketing and promotion measures, for citizens from certain countries visa-free regime is proposed to set, to improve business investment environment.

The RPA also focuses on the economic aspect in other sections of the election program. E.g., the army can become the impetus of the economy, the locomotive of the technological progress. As the army is one of the biggest consumers in the country, it cannot but have impact on the economic progress of the country.

They also tackle upon the relations with our neighboring countries – Iran and Georgia, while focusing on the implementation of the full economic potential. In the election program a special section has been allocated to Armenia's membership to Eurasian economic union, with which, according to RPA, wide opportunities are opened for the economic development. Cooperation and deepening of collaboration with the European Union in the course of reforms in our country has also been considered as key, while attempting to finish negotiations around the new legal framework.

Importance has been attached to the environment protection, improvement and ensuring true sustainable economic growth through reasonable usage of natural resources.

SOCIAL ASPECT

The state's first issue of care should be the social protection aspect. Although during the recent years effective growth has been registered in this field and corruption risks have reduced, there still are a number of problems – insufficient level of targeted assessment of family vulnerability, imperfectness of the database in the allowance system, insufficient level of protecting the rights of persons with disability, problems of the unemployed. That system does not encourage active search of a job, many vulnerable families are left out of the state program for social support.

The goal of the RPA is to form an effective, targeted and transparent system for the management of the labor and social protection aspect. The intended solutions are: enhancement of targeted state programs for regulating employment, and effectiveness of management, full introduction of the system for volunteer work, complete review of the system for salary and social-labor minimum safeguards, introduction of the common information system of the social protection aspect. It is envisaged that the system for family insecurity will be changed.

The problems of Armenia's healthcare system are: disproportion of allocated budget means and received results; disproportionate regional distribution of healthcare infrastructures and

professional potential; absence of uniform standards for quality medical aid and service; low level of supervision over the allocated funds, effectiveness of practical mechanisms for quality management. As a result, RA citizens have to pay extra for the free services defined by the state; the principle of social justice is often not maintained for the more vulnerable strata.

The solutions are as follows: transition should be made from the procurement system, currently functioning in the shade and with non-market mechanisms to formation of a healthcare system based on the supervision over allocated financial means and their being targeted, and on practical mechanisms of quality management. It is necessary to review the legislation regulating the aspect of medical aid and service; the fact of being vulnerable and the principle of social justice should be put at the bases free medical aid; to localize the approved regime of European and American medical associations; gradually to introduce the institute of medical insurance. To maintain human health and increase the quality of life it is necessary to strengthen the state supervision over environment – air, quality of water, protection of green areas, defining high criteria for waste processing.

The RPA intends to conduct measures for youth employment and special support programs for families of socially vulnerable youth. The problems of youth employment will be solved through creation of new workplaces, encouraging entrepreneurship and increasing their competitiveness in the labor market.

ARMENIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The election program of the Armenian Communist Party consists of 23674 characters, which is equal to 13 pages.

In the election program the sections related to economic issues make 11963 characters, which is equal to 6.6 pages, which is 50.53% of the total volume of the program.

The sections related to social issues make 5162 characters, which is equal to 2.9 pages, which is 21.80% of the total volume of the program.

Thus in the election program the sections relating to social and economic issues make 72.33% of the total volume of the program.

Besides the economic and social issues, the following thematic sections are also included in the election program of the Armenian Communist party: “Foreign policy”, “Domestic policy”, “Armenian army”, “Education and science”, “Infrastructures”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

In its election program, the Armenian Communist Party states, that it will come up with the requirement to make radical changes in the economic policy, i.e. to raise the regulating role of the state. Industrialization will be the main direction of the economic policy, starting with the domestic corporations until implementation of joint industrial policy with the EAEU countries.

The communists exclude ineffective liberal economic policy, which, according to their assessment, resulted in social over-polarization of the society, i.e. a group of rich and mass poor. ACP intends to implement effective policy of reducing tax pressure, while contributing to transparent payment of taxes by the businesses and reduction of corruption. The state will run effective mobilization policy while achieving annual GDP growth of 7-8%. The operation of

monopolies will be strictly monitored, in particular losses of gas, water, electric energy and other services, while setting up normative limits.

Introducing the huge potential Armenia had in the not far past, and comparing it today's evidently reducing indexes, the ACP recommends adopting a law "On Industrial policy", along with that to create Ministry of Industry and foreign trade with functional-line functions.

Communists consider it necessary to encourage establishment of joint-stock companies, with the participation of the state, economic operators and other investors, as well as to demonstrate active state intervention in the launching of factories of strategic importance and to make their activities more effective. Communists consider it necessary to promote economic development in the marzes, while announcing Shirak, which survived a disaster, and bordering Tavush as free economic zones.

In the field of agriculture, the ACP recommends to provide the farmers long-term loans with a low – 2-3% interest rate with the support from the state, and when retiring, to consider the years of work as work experience. The communists intend to support the farmers to establish companies functioning on voluntary basis, i.e. cooperatives and other cooperation units, to subsidize the production of agricultural products. They also recommend to establish breeding and seed-production businesses, as well as nationwide association of consumer cooperation (Armco-op) to contribute to the export and wholesale realization of agricultural products in the local market.

Taking into consideration that the RA state debt is 5.93bln US dollars, and that the ratio between the external debt and the GDP has exceeded the 50% threshold, the Communists consider it very concerning that Armenia will be recognized as a non-creditworthy country. According to the assessment by the ACP, the interest rates of the loans given by the Armenian trade banks do not contribute to the development of the economy. In this respect, it is recommended to provide long-term loans to the industry with low interest rates. The Communists consider it necessary to reduce constantly the interest rates of refinancing by the Central bank and conduct close monitoring by the bank over the normative functions of loans by the trade banks, taking the effective economic development as basis. The communists also recommend that the money (AMD 1.7 trillion), deposited in the Armenian banks by physical and legal persons, be converted into profitable shares to be invested in the profitable aspects of the economy.

The ACP states the current high level of corruption and shade economy in Armenia, assessing it higher than 30%, and notes that budgetary inflows are under-collected by at least 1bln dollars, which impedes the economic development and implementation of social programs. The current flat collection of income tax does not contribute to ensuring social justice, so it is necessary to apply progressive collection of income tax. The budget should be formed predominantly from direct taxes – income tax, profit tax, etc., which will predict the tendencies of the economic development. The communists recommend adopting a law, which, through tax functions, will regulate ineffective usage of real estate (factory, enterprise, etc.) and land. Importance is also attached to the following: to contribute to the establishment and development of small and medium businesses through tax guiding policy.

While assessing the status of aviation, and comparing it with the level of development of the given system in Soviet Armenia, the communists state that the present "open sky" policy is anachronistic and does not contribute to the progress of this sector. To revive the Armenian aviation, the ACP proposes taking decisive steps, first of all to reform the law regulating this field.

The communists attach importance to the issue of developing Armenian railway, while recommending to allocate resources and with 50/50 proportion of expenditures, along with the

railway of the Russian Federation, to build the new 31.2km railway Vanadzor-Fioletovo, the operation of which will cut down the road of cargo brought and delivered to Armenia by 100-150km, and the price for cargo transportation will reduce by 25-27%. The ACP considers it important also to take specific steps to start the construction of Armenia-Iran railway, as well as within short period to pave intermarz and intercommunity roads in Armenia.

SOCIAL ASPECT

Armenian Communist party is sure that based on the huge experience of economic development of the society of the not far past, it can develop and implement radical alterations in the social aspect, which will ensure conditions for prosperous life.

Noting that 1/3 of the population is considered poor, that according to the official statistics the level of unemployment is more than 18% and that during the last two years more than 24000 people emigrated from the country, the communists promise to double the salary and minimum base of calculating the pension during the 2017-2022.

The ACP recommends changing the current system of giving child care allowance to mothers, and adopting a law on mother's capital. The communists consider it necessary to provide state support to young families in obtaining an apartment, through providing them long-term loans – for more than 20 years, and with minimum interest rate, as well as create initial conditions to provide the youth with jobs.

According to the ACP program, apartment utility expenses should not exceed 10-15% of the population income.

In its program, the ACP intends to increase the role and authority of Armenia's trade unions in protection of workers' rights and interests, to review "RA Law on trade unions" and the "RA Labor code" while aligning them with the requirements of the conventions of the International Labor Organization.

In 2017, 4.3% (AMD 85.7bln) of the state budget expenditure was allocated to the healthcare system, which, according to the assessment by the communists, creates serious problems in the issues of restoring and maintaining a person's health. Paid treatment, limited nature of the state order treatment and the existing system of co-financing deprives the socially vulnerable groups in the society from the opportunity of complete treatment. To treat many diseases, especially in cases of patients with malignant neoplasm (their number is more than 8500), the state order covers only 30% of the costs, the communists state while proposing to make radical reforms in the system of healthcare and to adopt a priority direction – first of to help people in vulnerable groups and those not in the social packages. It is recommended to reform the health insurance system as well, via creating a healthcare fund at the expense of state, charity and other means. In the ACP program it is intended to increase financial allocations for free medical aid parallel with the continuous growth of the GDP. Along with that it is necessary to increase the volume of local medication production (especially medications which have passed the preclinical probation period), as well as to lift the VAT on medication, which would reduce their price and make them more available especially for the socially vulnerable strata.

“OHANYAN-RAFFI-OSKANYAN” ALLIANCE OF PARTIES

Election program of the “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance consists of 52548 characters, which is equal to 29 pages.

In the election program the sections related to economic issues make 7711 characters, which is equal to 4.3 pages, which is 14.67% of the total volume of the program.

The sections related to social issues make 4859 characters, which is equal to 2.7 pages, which is 9.25% of the total volume of the program.

Thus in the election program the sections relating to social and economic issues make 23.92% of the total volume of the program.

Besides the economic section, the election program of “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance contains the following thematic sections: “State governance, political system and human rights”, “Bank system”, “Judicial system”, “Civil society”, “Education and science”, “Culture”, “Army”, “Foreign policy”, “Artsakh”, “Strong Armenia – powerful Diaspora”, “Youth, sports and country progress”, “Free economy – free mass media”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

The motto of the “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance for economic aspect is “Powerful economy – powerful Armenia”. “One of the important components of ensuring security of the Republic of Armenia is its economy, which is in a heavy and crisis condition today”, - stated “Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance in its election program, while, according to their description, proposing radical reforms to get out of the situation.

In particular, the alliance has defined a “365 days – timetable for daily changes”, in which priority is given to elimination of the vicious system of artificial monopolies, to formation of new quality economic relations stipulated by the new tax code and a monetary policy supporting the local producer, to radical reform in the work of customs check-points and to assistance to small and medium businesses. In the sector of public procurement and expenditure policy, it is intended to conduct strict control and exclusion of practicing “legal” corruption mechanisms. As a result, of democratic reforms, the “ORO” alliance proposes to include Armenia in the “Millennium challenges” economic program again.

In the fields of industry and energy, the alliance envisages to take radical steps aimed at the development of light industry, to boost the development of resource-saving and science-based industry, which is based on the local raw material. To ensure the country’s energy independence, the alliance will promote the development of alternative (solar, wind and geothermal) energy. The mandatory standards of energy-saving and thermal isolation will be legally enshrined in the procedures of giving state permits for constructions, thus by 30% cutting down the annual energy consumption. With tax-customs tools, the alliance intends to promote maximum extraction of minerals from ores in the mining industry and preparation of the final product from it.

In the field of agriculture, the alliance proposes soft tax policy, through the application of which will increase the productivity and decrease the cost price, while contributing to the food security. Importance is attached to the introduction of the insurance system, establishment of farm cooperatives.

Special status will be given to the bordering settlements. The alliance will propose changes and amendments in the “Law on land tax” and other law relating to other agricultural fields, to provide benefits in bordering and high mountainous areas. The practical steps to be taken are as follows: supporting the production and export of agricultural products, as well as subsidizing companies processing agricultural products. Effective crediting system will be introduced, state subsidizing of up to 50% will be applied against the interest rates for agricultural loans. Special soft loaning and tax conditions will be applied against farms in high mountainous and bordering zones. The aforementioned legislative changes will be made. A flexible insurance system will be created for agriculture and farmers. Under state supervision, a quality inspection system will be introduced in the processing enterprises, with which the interests of the farmer will be protected and self-willed activities will be excluded.

To make the army powerful, it is necessary to develop an army-based economy, while building it on hi technology and modern science.

SOCIAL ASPECT

“Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanyan” alliance pictures the solution of social problems through improving business environment, increasing the level of state governing system and targeted social policy.

According to the alliance, currently one of the cleverest strata is the pensioners, with low pension. One of the initial steps to solve the problems of pensioners is to keep the pensions away from depreciation. To bring this goal into reality, the alliance proposes indexation of the pensions, which assumes additional indexation money in the amount of depreciation.

The social policy of the alliance will be implemented in the following directions – significant reduction of poverty level, mitigation of social polarization, introduction of a system ensuring dignified elderly life, increasing the quality of people’s life, indexation of salaries for people working in budgetary entities.

In the field of healthcare, the alliance proposes perfection of legislative aspect and registering significant positive progress through budgetary policy. To make medical service affordable, importance is attached to the introduction of a mandatory and voluntary medical insurance. Importance is also attached to increasing salaries personnel in out-patient hospitals and in ambulance services.

The alliance paid special attention to the targeted policy of healthcare of vulnerable strata, according to which state funds should be directly allocated to the patients, providing them the opportunity to choose the medical institution. Importance is attached to the disease prevention policy through active operation of out-patient hospitals and permanent propagation of healthy life, as well as ensuring labor protection of public servants by law.

In its election program the alliance referred to the social problems of the freedom fighters, introducing them as creators of the basis of independent statehood, people’s security and glorious victory. The steps aimed at the social security of the freedom fighters are: to provide dignified and wealthy life for them and for their families through introducing precise mechanisms, to solve treatment and health rehabilitation problems, provide them with workplaces, including through private business.

To stop emigration and to replace it with immigration, the alliance proposes complex measures, including new economic policy, exercising justice, creation of workplaces through foreign and local investments.

Complex programs are also intended to support young families: give the parents AMD100000 after the first child is delivered, AMD500000 after the second child, AMD 1mln after the third child, AMD 2mln after the fourth child. To form a “3mln AMD” personal fund of maternal capital, that the mother will use exclusively for the fourth child, and the monthly AMD 18000 child allowance will be increased to AMD 30000, and will be paid until the child is three years old.

The alliance also envisages a system for scholarships and promotion measures for success in education and science, i.e. applying significant discounts for socially vulnerable students and students with excellent performance, providing soft and available mortgage loans to obtain an apartment.

“ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY -FEDERATION” DASHNAKTSUTYUN

The election program of the “Armenian Revolutionary Federation” Dshnaktsutyun party consists of 17867 characters, which is equal to almost 10 pages.

In the election program the sections related to economic issues make 4699 characters, which is equal to 2.6 pages, which is 26.3% of the total volume of the program.

The sections related to social issues make 3139 characters, which is equal to 1.8 pages, which is 17.87% of the total volume of the program.

Thus in the election program the sections relating to social and economic issues make 44.17% of the total volume of the program.

In the election program of the ARFD, economic issues are tackled upon in two sections – “The man and the state”, “Business and state”. Besides these, the program of the party also includes the following topics: “State governance”, “Artsakh”, “Security” and “Foreign policy”.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

According to the ARFD, Armenia’s economic policy, since gaining independence, has been based on the liberal ideology of self-regulated market and “transitional economy” approach, however the state has shaken off the responsibility for their citizens, leaving the “strongest” to win in the wild competition, without caring for the fate those who “lost”

The ARFD states, that under current conditions only a small group of “winners” enjoys the goods of the economic growth, and then concludes that the state alienated itself from the citizen, and the citizen was alienated from the state.

The ARFD proposes radically to change the logics of the country’s social-economic development, making a transition to a social market economy enshrined in the new constitution, while ensuring fair distribution of the economic growth and economic effect among all members of the society, to create such a mechanism, which will exclude over-usage of natural resources, will ensure their complex management.

At the same time, the ARFD is sure that the state should back up the businessman, support him/her, ensure fair conditions of competition and precise rules of doing business. Moreover, the

state should be ready to share the business risk with the private businesses, to lead in the fields, where the risk is higher, or where profitability is lower or the private financing is missing. The ARFD makes a reference to the example of most liberal and conservative political powers in the world, which support the enterprises in their countries, whereas in our country they are alone in the global competition.

The ARFD proposes to create fair conditions to do entrepreneurship. Small and medium businesses, ensure not only income and job, but often become the victims of big companies. The banks, credit organizations, instead of ensuring economic progress, often look like merchants, with unrealistic and humiliating terms of crediting.

The party proposes to share the business risk with enterprises of strategic and social importance within the scope of public-private sector partnership, to review its status as passive observer in economic issues and more actively to support those enterprises, to establish joint companies with them, to provide venture financing, loans and other benefits.

The ARFD proposes to intensify combating monopolies and dishonest competition, while making the sanctions system more stringent and ensuring free entry into the market, as well as to relieve the inspection burden highlighting that the inspections should be aimed only at dishonest businesses, and should not become a baton on the head of the legitimate enterprises. When forming educational state order, the party proposes to be led by the current and prospective needs of the economy, considering it important that the business, scientific and educational systems closely cooperate.

The party also proposes to review the services provided by the natural monopolies, while stating that the set prices are not realistic and affordable for many entrepreneurs, which brings about the over-profit of the natural monopolies.

SOCIAL ASPECT

The ARFD, first of all highlights the huge amount of emigration as a result of difficult social situation in Armenia, when an Armenian person, not feeling the care by his/her own country, tries to connect his/her future with other countries. The party considers it important to change the logics of country's social-economic development radically, to restore the state's and the person's responsibility towards each other.

The party considers exercising a person's right to labor as a priority, to live a dignified life, while setting the minimum salary not lower than the consumer goods basket. Dashnaktsutyun draw attention to people who appeared in difficult conditions of life, while proposing that the state conduct active policy in ensuring their entry into the labor market, as well as to ensure comfortable life for the elderly.

The ARFD proposes to establish a system of health insurance, which will enable each person to have an opportunity for treatment. Referring to the topic of emigration, to prevent it, the party proposes creating opportunities so that each young person who served in the army and threatened his life for independence and people's welfare is able to meet the needs for housing and a job. Important attention has been paid to the problems of making people with physical and mental disorders as full member of the society, so that they exercise their right to education, job and movement. To contribute to the establishment of young families, the party proposes to meet their social-economic, housing requirements, stating that because of low level of employment and other reasons late marriages and low birth rate put the country on the verge of a demographic disaster.

CONCLUSION

The results of monitoring the programs of parties and alliances participating in the parliamentary elections on April 2, 2017, show that those powers have attached great importance to social and economic problems. It can be conditioned by the fact that during the recent months the public have learned true indicators about the country's economy, which speak of deep crisis. The consequence of that is the more threatening social condition. Under these conditions both the ruling party, and the opposition parties in particular, could not but pay relevant attention to these two most important aspects.

The quantitative data of the monitoring prove that almost all the parties and alliances participating in the elections have paid more attention to economic rather than social topics. Although these two topics are closely connected, according to the programs by the political powers, only in case of economic progress it will be possible to improve the social conditions.

At the same time, when referring to both economic and social problems, the parties and alliances made populist promises and used purely declarative provisions, and in certain cases, those sections are just a description of kind desires. Calculations substantiated with specific numbers and persuasive arguments are rare.

Along with the mentioned drawbacks, the introduced programs give certain ideas about the approaches of the political parties in the campaign, and can contribute to the citizens being informed and voting based on knowledge.