

# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2025 | NO. 26 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

## WHO SAID ARMENIANS DON'T GET ALONG?

10 BANKS AND 3 TELECOMS UNITE FOR A NEW ERA OF DIGITAL ID IN ARMENIA

## A POEM BORN IN YEREVAN

AN ENGLISHMAN'S LOVE FOR ARMENIA

## THE SMART MOVE

EXPANDING YOUR TECH OPERATIONS TO ARMENIA

## ARMENIA'S AI-EDTECH EXPORT STRATEGY

CASE STUDY OF AN AI-POWERED PROCTORING SOLUTION FOR THE U.S. MARKET

## CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

WHERE DO ARMENIANS FALL ON THE AMBITION-JOY SPECTRUM BETWEEN CROATIANS AND AMERICANS?

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT E-LOGI FEST 25

LOGISTICS, E-COMMERCE, AND SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATION

## REIMAGINING COMMERCIAL SPACES

THE LEED ADVANTAGE FOR TECH COMPANIES IN ARMENIA

## BECOMING A GLOBAL TECH NOMAD

LAUNCHING AN AI-DRIVEN BUSINESS FROM ARMENIA WITH MINIMAL OVERHEAD





# MATHEW ZEIN

## EDITOR'S LETTER

Nearing the end of my eighth year in Armenia, with my ninth just around the corner, I find myself sinking deeper and deeper into this country and all aspects of living here.

This magazine issue brings together a wonderfully diverse collection of voices, from France to Oman, the US to right here in Armenia, and spanning the Netherlands, Germany, and the UK. These are people of all ages and with all sorts of passions, yet they share one connection: their love for Armenia and the life it offers.

As you scroll the pages, you'll get a sense of how Armenia truly affects those who live here and the emotional pull it has on them. Even those who only experience it for a few weeks leave with a changed perspective.

Who'd have guessed a British professional would be moved to write poetry about Yerevan just from spending some time here? Or that a French woman, having seen Armenia through thick and thin, would never want to leave? And who would've thought an Arab expert from the Gulf would find himself constantly thinking about Armenia long after he's gone? These are just glimpses of the stories waiting for you in this issue of Life in Armenia.

*Mathew Zein*



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## WHO SAID ARMENIANS DON'T GET ALONG? 10 BANKS AND 3 TELECOMS UNITE FOR A NEW ERA OF DIGITAL ID IN ARMENIA

Against the odds, 10 banks and three telecom giants in Armenia have joined forces to create imID, a unified digital ID platform. This collaboration is streamlining identity verification for everything from banking to online services, positioning Armenia as an advanced digital economy with global ambitions.

## ARMENIA'S AI-EDTECH EXPORT STRATEGY CASE STUDY OF AN AI-POWERED PROCTORING SOLUTION FOR THE U.S. MARKET

Just as in chess, the most powerful moves are not always the most obvious; they are the ones that control the game. Rather than competing with tech giants head-on, Armenia can dominate niche markets requiring specialized AI solutions. Learn about Armenia's AI export strategy through a case study of an AI-powered proctoring solution for the U.S. market developed in Armenia.

## THE EDUCATION ARMENIA NEEDS IN 2025 - PART 1 GRADUATING WITH A MASTER'S IN PIRATE ADMINISTRATION

Imagine a "Pirate School" for startup founders. A successful American-Armenian entrepreneur explores the parallels between historical pirates and today's tech entrepreneurs in Armenia. Explore his perspectives on blending Silicon Valley ambition with a balanced lifestyle, drawing comparisons to Croatia's approach.

## REIMAGINING COMMERCIAL SPACES THE LEED ADVANTAGE FOR TECH COMPANIES IN ARMENIA

Yerevan's original climate-conscious design offers a blueprint for modern sustainability. Discover how LEED certification can help Armenia's booming tech sector build healthier, more efficient commercial spaces, aligning with the city's green roots and attracting international investment.

## A POEM BORN IN YEREVAN AN ENGLISHMAN'S LOVE FOR ARMENIA

An Englishman's discovery of Armenia went far beyond a job. From a taste of its cuisine in London to breathtaking views of Ararat and a deep connection to its people, this poem captures a surprising and heartfelt love for Yerevan. Experience the city's spirit through the eyes of a British newcomer who found an unexpected home.

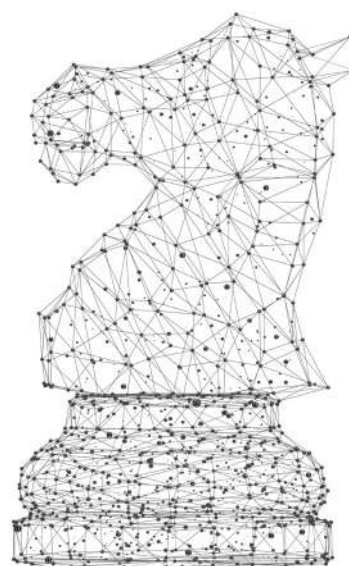
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## WHAT TO EXPECT AT E-LOGI FEST 25 LOGISTICS, E-COMMERCE, AND SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATION

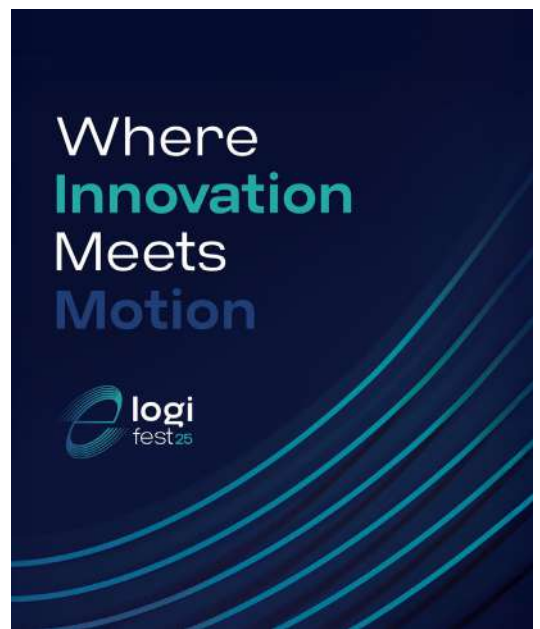
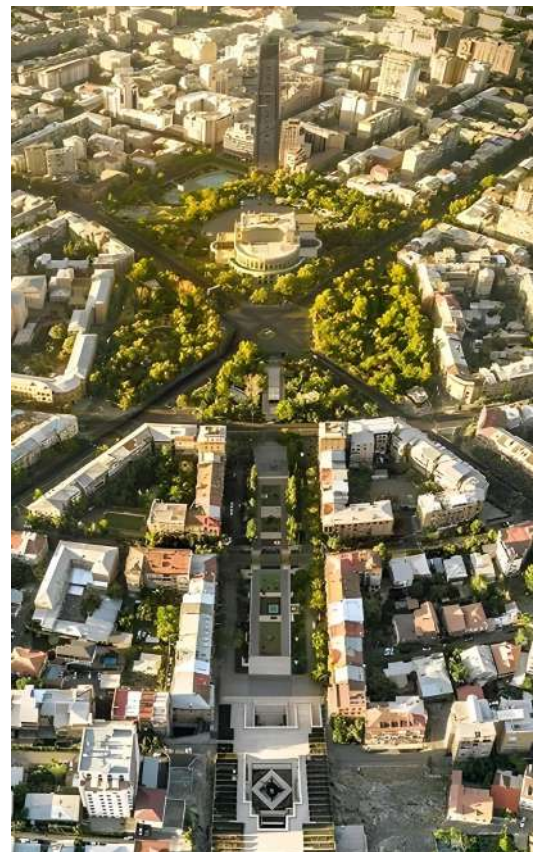
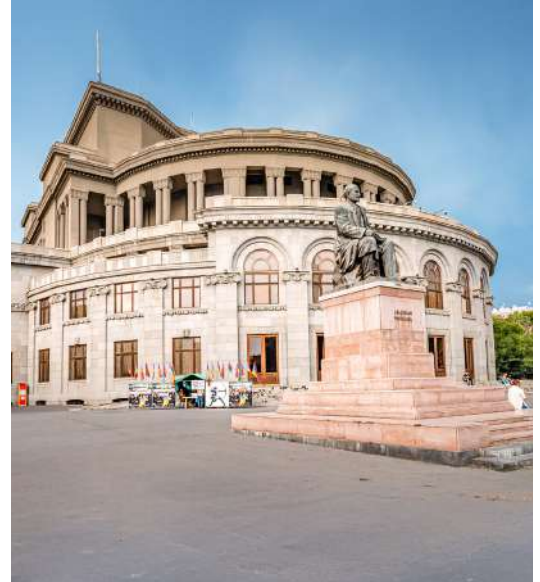
Get ready for Armenia's first major logistics and e-commerce event! E-Logi Fest 25 will gather global experts to discuss the industry's future, from AI and green solutions to new trade routes and faster deliveries. Discover how Armenia aims to become a key player in regional and global logistics, leveraging its unique position and innovative approaches.

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## BECOMING A GLOBAL TECH NOMAD LAUNCHING AN AI-DRIVEN BUSINESS FROM ARMENIA WITH MINIMAL OVERHEAD

Dream of location independence and launching your own AI-driven business? A French AI enthusiast living in Armenia shares a personal journey, revealing how to utilize readily available tech to create your own freedom. A must-read for aspiring tech nomads and anyone seeking to build a business on their own terms.

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## FROM THE SULTANATE OF OMAN TO ARMENIA A COACHING EXPERT'S IMPRESSIONS OF HIS FIRST VISIT TO YEREVAN

A coaching expert from the Gulf shares his captivating first impressions of Yerevan. From the airport's authentic feel to the warm embrace of the Armenian people and a surprising connection to his Egyptian roots, discover why this visitor felt an instant "addiction" to Armenia's blend of history, technology, and genuine hospitality.

## THE BUBBLES THEY TRIED TO BANISH A SPARKLING JOURNEY FROM CHAMPAGNE TO ARMENIA

Discover the surprising history of champagne, from unwanted bubbles to a global symbol of celebration. Journey to Armenia, where ancient winemaking traditions now embrace sparkling innovations using unique local grapes and methods. Learn about the flavors and unexpected food pairings that make Armenian bubbly a delightful discovery.

## ESCAPE TO THE ARMENIAN ALPS ARMENIA'S MOUNTAIN CABIN CALLING DIGITAL NOMADS

Welcome to the little-known beauty of Armenia's mountains. Discover a charming cabin in nature, offering stunning panoramic views and a chance to reconnect. Experience genuine local hospitality with fresh, regional food. Learn about the inspiring vision behind this unique retreat, created to share the tranquility and allure of rural Armenia.

## GITEX EUROPE 2025 REIGNING AN OPEN, BOLD & COLLABORATIVE EUROPEAN DIGITAL ECONOMY AMIDST €200BN AI AMBITIONS

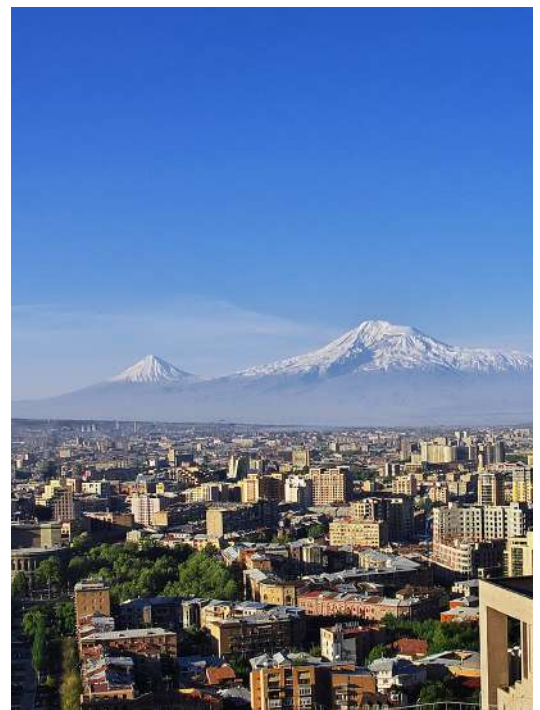
Europe is making a bold push in the digital economy, fueled by a €200 billion AI ambition. GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything (May 21-23, Messe Berlin) will be the continent's largest inaugural tech, startup, and digital investment event, hosting over 1,400 enterprises and startups from over 100 countries.

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# DALAN TECHNOPARK

WHERE POTENTIAL BECOMES PERFORMANCE





WHO SAID ARMENIANS DON'T GET ALONG?

# 10 BANKS AND 3 TELECOMS UNITE FOR A NEW ERA OF DIGITAL ID IN ARMENIA



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**ARMEN A.  
AVAKIAN**

CPMO at ImID





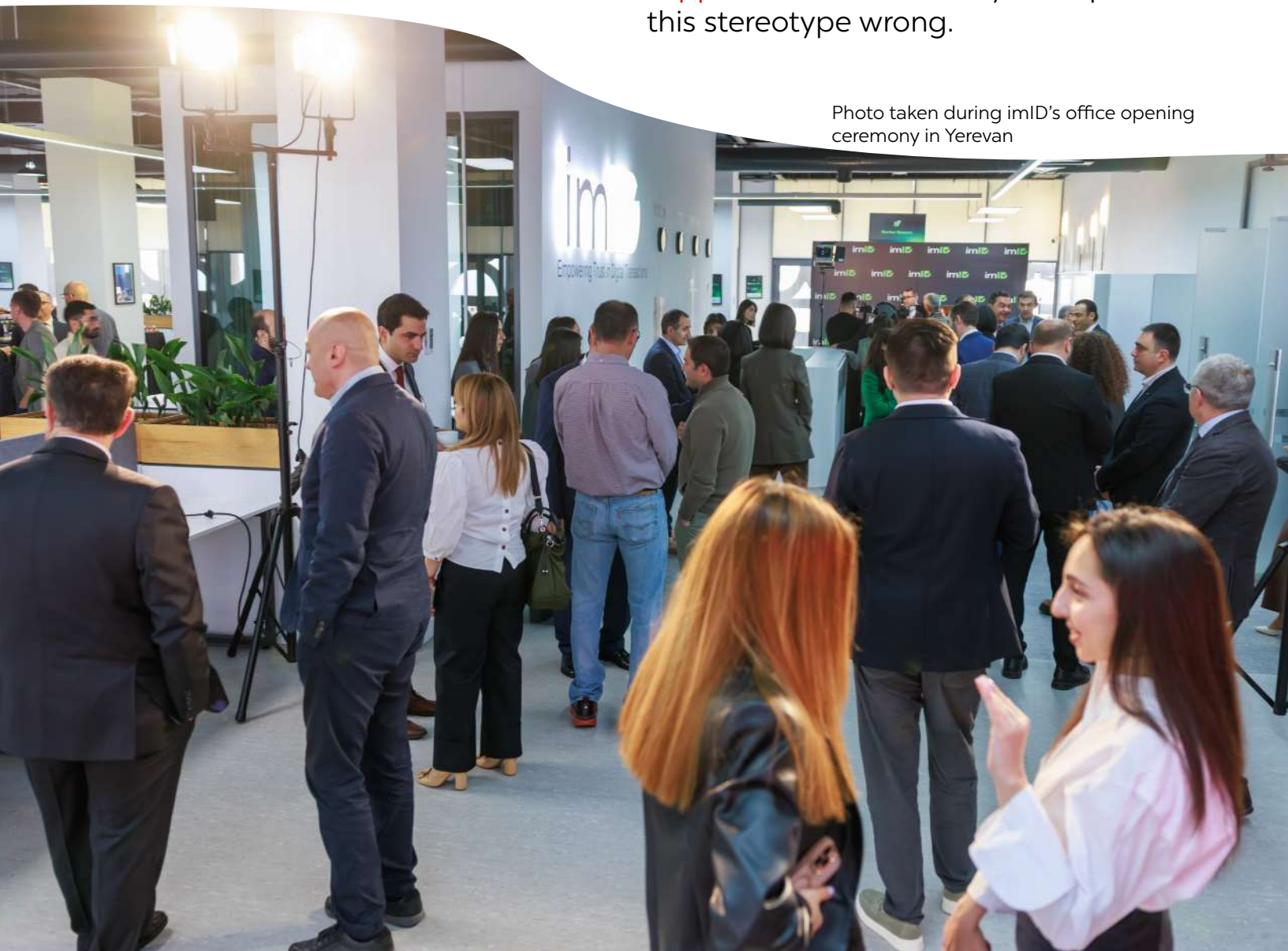
## WHO SAID ARMENIANS DON'T GET ALONG? 10 BANKS AND 3 TELECOMS UNITE FOR A NEW ERA OF DIGITAL ID IN ARMENIA

“Armenians are so good on their own, but they can’t work together.”

I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve heard this since coming to Armenia. Half the time, it’s Armenians themselves saying it to me! Unfortunately, the problem with repeating something so often is that it starts to feel true—even if it isn’t!

This idea may date back to the chaotic years after the Soviet collapse, when everyone had to survive in Armenia, and trust was lost. However, things have changed a lot, and this is not the case anymore! In fact, in my daily interaction with the tech ecosystem in Armenia and abroad, I’ve witnessed **Armenians collaborate, innovate, and support each other** in ways that prove this stereotype wrong.

Photo taken during imID’s office opening ceremony in Yerevan





# The Armenian Trust Service Provider

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Recently, I had an interesting conversation with Mr. [Armen A. Avakian](#), an American-Armenian tech founder and professional who recently joined imID as a CPMO. If you don't know him, let's just say that if a company in Armenia managed to excite Mr. Avakian, then it's worth learning more about—because he's not just any ordinary CPMO you meet every day. He's one of the masterminds in marketing, the kind who leaves an entire crowd in silence when he [speaks](#).

From what I've heard from him, Armenians don't just work well together—they **exceed expectations when they do**.

Mr. Karen Mkoyan, CEO at imID, and  
Mr. Armen A. Avakian CPMO at imID



Let's start with some context. Armenia may be a small country, but its banking and tech sectors are pretty much developed. With 18 banks and three major telecom providers, the market is competitive—yet **something happened in 2024 when 10 banks and all three telecom companies set aside competition** to launch [imID](#), a shared digital identification platform, or, as they call it, the Armenian trust service provider.

imID became Armenia's nationwide digital ID system, allowing citizens to verify their identity across banks, mobile services, different types of businesses, and government platforms. The goal is to replace outdated paperwork and insecure digital verification methods with safe, instant authentication—**whether opening a bank account, signing a contract, or accessing online services**.

“

## Armen A. Avakian

Chief Product and  
Marketing Officer at imID

If imID says this user is Armen, then it is Armen. It's similar to walking into someone's office and verifying the process in person.”

Unlike Europe's similar approaches, where digital IDs (e.g., Nordic BankID) and payments (e.g., Spain's Bizum) operate separately, Armenia's platform merges strong authentication, SIM-based security, and payment verification into a single system. Additionally, in Armenia, the **Central Bank supported the partnership, while banks and telecoms own it.** Meanwhile, many European systems (e.g., Austria's Mobile Signature and MitID in Denmark) are government-mandated. Given Armenia's relatively small economy, this **speaks volumes about the country and its tech force.**

What makes this remarkable isn't the technology—it's the collaboration. In a market where users are limited and businesses often guard their turf, these competitors **pooled resources to build something bigger than themselves**, and it worked. At its core, imID is changing how Armenians authenticate their identity across sensitive sectors—starting with banking and telecommunications, but designed to expand far beyond.



Empowering Trust in Digital Transactions

BOSTON



TOKYO



YEREVAN



WELCOME



# Expanding The Digital Ecosystem

Recently, imID officially announced imID IDaaS, a secure, scalable API-based solution that empowers businesses with seamless digital identity verification and **eliminates the complexities of traditional authentication**. It allows businesses to onboard new users, verify identities, and get confirmation for transactions with no headaches and no extra resources spent.

Today, imID is **open to other businesses and agencies in Armenia** and will probably be open to others abroad in the near future. The architecture is already in place. Any service provider—public or private—can plug into imID's API using the same identity verification that banks and telecoms rely on.



## Armen A. Avakian

Chief Product and Marketing Officer at imID

imID IDaaS can be integrated into your web solution, app, or any other digital device, giving you interoperability and a strong legal base.”



The same system that authenticates a bank transfer today could **soon secure government services**—from tax filings to passport renewals—as well as healthcare by granting instant, secure access to medical records. It could also transform education by verifying student enrollment or diploma authenticity and even enhance retail and e-commerce by authenticating local sellers and buyers.

Mr. Armen A. Avakian, CPMO at imID, Mr. Sargis Karapetyan, CEO at UATE, and Ms. Edita Ghazaryan, Deputy CEO at UATE, during imID's office opening ceremony in Yerevan



## Armen A. Avakian

Chief Product and Marketing Officer at imID

As more sectors join, the value grows. As a result, citizens carry one universal digital identity, businesses reduce fraud, and Armenia moves closer to a fully digital economy.”



imID's office  
in Yerevan, Armenia



According to Mr. Avakian, imID is a strategic **shift in how Armenia handles identity verification, built to global standards.** It aligns with the EU's eIDAS framework to ensure future interoperability with European digital services. He shared that Obserwatorium, a reputable Polish consulting firm, is guiding them in achieving compliance. Additionally, their system complies with ISO/IEC 27001 information security standards, **implementing bank-grade encryption for all biometric data and personal information.**



# From A Soviet Country to A Digital Leader

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Many might not realize it, especially those who've never been here, but Armenia is actually more digitally advanced than some larger economies, **particularly when it comes to** automating governmental processes.

The E-Participation Index (EPART) ranks Armenia 27th out of 193 countries, while the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) ranks Armenia 48th out of 193 countries in 2024, moving from its 64th place in 2022; both indices are issued by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

With upcoming new biometric ID cards, new biometric passports, and even a digital ID system—all integrated into

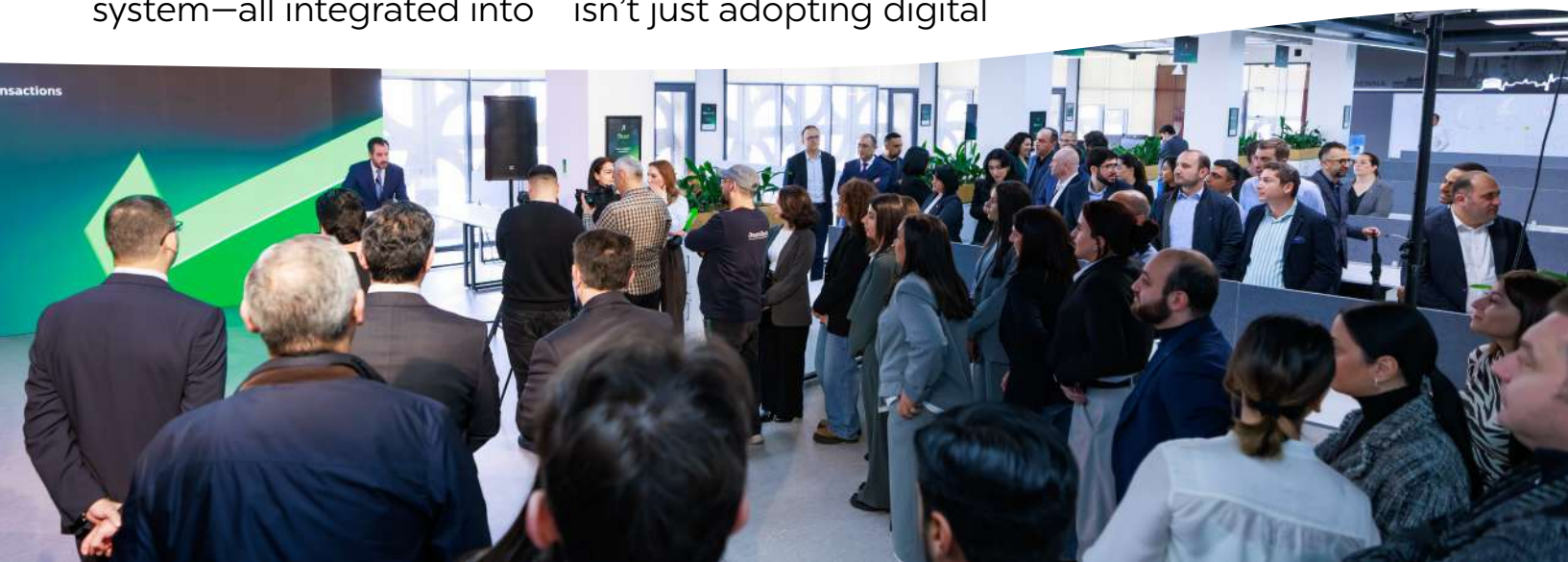
government services—the country will take its **socioeconomic evolution to the next level**. In one way or another, imID aligns with the government's vision for Armenia's digital ID system, and the timing couldn't be better.

Starting March 29, citizens can take their imID at any telecom branch by presenting their ID.

As many foreign readers reach this point in the article, you might wonder why you've never heard much about Armenia before, or if you have, you likely imagined a country with no internet infrastructure, few mobile apps, or even sporadic electricity. Yet suddenly, you discover that Armenia isn't just adopting digital

identification—it's **aiming to export it to the world**. The myth that Armenians can't collaborate has gone with the wind. From Silicon Valley's tight-knit Armenian tech networks to homegrown ventures like imID, the evidence is clear: **Armenians are so good when they work together**.

While other countries struggle with fragmented digital identity systems (some led by banks, others by governments), Armenia's imID merges biometrics, SIM-based security, and payment verification into one system—**owned not by the state but by the private sector**—to prove that when Armenians unite behind a shared vision, they don't just keep up—they can lead.



# CASE STUDY OF AN AI-POWERED PROCTORING SOLUTION FOR THE U.S. MARKET



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# ARMENIA'S AI-EDTECH EXPORT STRATEGY

## CASE STUDY OF AN AI-POWERED PROCTORING SOLUTION FOR THE U.S. MARKET

In the March 2025 issue of Life in Armenia, I interviewed experts from Canada, the United States, South Africa, Georgia, Switzerland, and—most importantly—Armenia to analyze the digital butterfly effect of the US \$500 billion AI infrastructure investment initiative and **its impact on Armenia's AI-powered educational software sector.**

Whether we like it or not, the digital butterfly effect is reshaping interconnected tech ecosystems worldwide. With this US investment initiative and the accelerating global AI development, education as we know it stands on the brink of transformation! The demand for adaptive, AI-driven EdTech solutions will soon become a necessity, and **the question is no longer if Armenia can compete, but how it will scale its successes.**



In this follow-up article, I'm exploring the technical and strategic factors enabling Armenia to export AI-EdTech solutions to first-world markets. To many, the equation may seem unbalanced: How can a small player like Armenia compete on such a global scale? Yet, in a country where chess is not just a game but a national discipline taught in schools, the most **impactful players are not always the ones with the most pieces**, but those who see the board differently.

Although Armenia might not have the largest pool of software developers or AI professionals, just like in chess, **a well-executed central control dictates the flow and potential of the entire game.**



To understand Armenia's potential for central control in AI development, I turned once again to Mr. [Suren Azatyan](#), Head of Business Development at [Zealous](#), a software engineering company based in Armenia. For context, Zealous has around 300 software engineers and 1 million+ hours of development experience across **large-scale and mega-projects for globally recognized brands**, companies so established that their names alone serve as validation.

I sat down with Mr. Azatyan again—**this time to discuss their software export strategy**, particularly in EdTech. In our previous discussion, he outlined tens of AI-powered educational projects Zealous has developed, but an AI-powered proctoring system for the U.S. market caught my attention; it's a software solution that **ensures academic integrity through machine learning and computer vision**. A perfect case study to understand how a company from Armenia breaks into first-world EdTech markets with such a level of sophisticated solutions.





**Unlike traditional proctoring methods that rely heavily on human invigilators,** this system automates identity verification, behavioral anomaly detection, and real-time fraud prevention, ensuring academic integrity at scale. Key features included digital identification and onboarding processes to verify examinee identities, real-time monitoring during examinations to detect fraud and unauthorized items via video analysis, and a comprehensive dashboard for data analytics to track and analyze examinations.







Implementing these features resulted in a strong and scalable proctoring system that provided identification, enhanced monitoring capabilities, and efficient data analysis for examination management.

According to Mr. Areg Gareginyan, Chief Architect at Zealous, the primary challenge for the client was to find a strategic technology partner capable of designing and developing an AI-based proctoring solution that would assist proctors in their daily work, increase their capacity, and ensure consistency over evaluations.

Despite this challenge, their collaboration led to several achievements, including a digital identification and onboarding process, enhanced monitoring and detection capabilities, and the development of a comprehensive dashboard for efficient tracking. These achievements were visible in the successful deployment of the system, which **serves over 10,000 users and has improved examination integrity.**





Mr. Gareginyan explained that a critical factor in Zealous's success was its collaboration with a leading U.S. assessment company during the product refinement phase to ensure the proctoring solution **aligns with the specific needs of testing environments**.

He continued that to address potential biases in behavioral analysis, which is a critical concern for AI systems deployed in diverse markets, Zealous prioritized dataset diversity from the beginning. The team **curated training data covering variations in age, gender, race, and behavior** (e.g., both legitimate exam actions and prohibited activities like using a phone). This inclusivity reduced the risk of false positives/negatives.

Trust is built by aligning solutions with measurable business outcomes to ensure the technology delivers tangible value. The proctoring case study shows how smaller tech ecosystems can compete globally by combining **strategic pragmatism and a commitment to solving well-defined problems precisely**.

Just as in chess, the most powerful moves are not always the most obvious—they are the ones that control the game. Rather than competing with tech giants head-on, **Armenia can dominate niche markets requiring specialized AI solutions**, such as adaptive learning and language processing.

“

## Suren Azatyan

Head of Business Development at Zealous

For Armenia to position itself as a trusted AI exporter, companies must first define success metrics that align with the customer's business objectives before designing and building any solution.”

THE EDUCATION ARMENIA NEEDS IN 2025 - PART 1

# GRADUATING WITH A MASTER'S IN PIRATE ADMINISTRATION

in



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

INTERVIEWING



**SUREN  
MARKOSIAN**

Founder and CEO of List.am





## THE EDUCATION ARMENIA NEEDS IN 2025 - PART 1

### GRADUATING WITH A MASTER'S IN PIRATE ADMINISTRATION

Ever thought that Armenia's future might be shaped by individuals holding an MPA - a Master's in Pirate Administration? A genuine educational concept envisioned by Suren Markosian, the prolific entrepreneur behind List.am and many other successful ventures.

Prepare to have your perceptions challenged as we discuss **the parallels between history's most daring buccaneers and today's tech founders**. We'll unpack what this surprising connection reveals about the Armenian startup ecosystem, Silicon Valley, Croatia, and the person behind it all, Suren Markosian!

## The Man Behind List.am

Suren Markosian is an American-Armenian serial entrepreneur with a remarkable track record. In 2013, he co-founded Epic, which became the leading digital reading platform for children, adopted by over 90% of schools in the US. He later sold it to Byju's for \$500 million. Earlier, in 2005, he established List.am, which has since grown into **Armenia's largest online destination and digital marketplace**.

If you've spent time in Armenia, you know that List.am has always been there. Yet, it never felt like a typical commercial brand. Instead, it managed to become part of the fabric of society without any marketing or promotion, but by simply offering a product that solved everyday problems for people. **Suren created and managed List.am on his own for a long time!** There was no branding, no marketing, and no team! Just a valuable service.





Having recently relocated and settled in Armenia, he's now established an office in Yerevan and built a team, even attracting talent from the US. He started actively developing List.am, enhancing its functionality, aiming to accelerate the country's digital transformation, deliver a world-class Armenian-made product, and expand its offerings to reach new heights.

This background helps you understand who Suren is and the value of the thoughts he shares.

## Master's in Pirate Administration (MPA)

Last month, Suren invited me and 30 others to List's office in Yerevan for a casual discussion about the "pirates" of Silicon Valley, where he literally **compared today's tech startup founders to medieval pirates**, and, to my surprise, the similarities were beyond anything I had imagined.

This wasn't one of those generic AI-generated posts comparing unrelated concepts with nonsensical connections. Instead, it was a compelling two-hour presentation filled with anecdotes, real-world examples, and insightful projections illustrating the surprising similarities between today's most successful startups and medieval pirates. I wish someone had taped that presentation because it should be taught to all startup founders.





He even joked about launching a “pirate school” (not to be confused with a typically valueless “business school”) where he would give startup founders the **most important certificate they**

**would ever need in their careers:** the MPA, the Master’s in Pirate Administration. Having attended his presentation, I totally agree!

In this first part, I’ll be talking about Armenian “pirates” – the startup founders – and **how they relate to Croatia and Silicon Valley**. Next month, in Part 2, I’ll go deeper into the hypothetical pirate school and everything Suren covered in his presentation.

## “More, More, and More” or “Just Enough”

Given Suren’s experience and digital nomad lifestyle, which introduced him to other nations and their tech ecosystems, he discussed the **position of Armenian founders within the global tech ecosystem**.

When COVID-19 forced the world to shut down, Suren and his family decided to move to Croatia – a beautiful Mediterranean country full of sunshine, a stunning coastline, and friendly people. During his time in Croatia, he learned a new way of life – the Croatian way and its entrepreneurial and tech ecosystems.





In Croatia, you'll often hear people say happiness is not when you have everything, but when you have enough. Embrace the "polako" ("slow") way of life, or how they say it in Dalmatia (the coastal part of Croatia) - "fijaka" - a term for a relaxed state of body and mind, best described as the "sweetness of doing nothing". Dalmatians have mastered the art of enjoying each day, not just getting richer and richer. **Work, for followers of this philosophy, is a means to a good life, not life itself.**

One story Suren recalls from his time in Croatia is when he needed someone to fix the electricity at his house. He called a technician who examined the electrical box and identified the problem, but then declined the job, stating it would be too much work. Even when offered double the rate, the technician refused, **likely because it was getting in the way of enjoying life.**

The Dalmatian concept of "fijaka" isn't just about rejecting extra work—it's a cultural philosophy that prioritizes contentment over accumulation. Suren observed how this mindset dominates everything from business negotiations to daily routines.

In Silicon Valley, where Suren spent over 20 years of his life and founded several successful companies, the focus tends to be on **believing that it is never enough**. Long hours, intense competition, and blurring lines between work and personal life are often seen as badges of honor in Silicon Valley's high-stakes environment. The pursuit of wealth isn't just about money or comfort; it's often linked to ambition, impact, self-actualization, and a drive to change the world.





I asked Suren which country he found more enjoyable as someone who lived in many different places and experienced many different cultures: the US, Croatia, or Armenia. He replied that every country has its unique traits, and it is a gift to be able to experience and learn from many different cultures. It is a highly personal choice: absolutely breathtaking Croatian coastal nature and warm and friendly local people, or Armenia with its emerging tech sector, or a well-developed US society with unlimited possibilities - keeping an open mind and a global perspective is the true answer.

But if Croatia represents one end of the spectrum, prioritizing “fijaka” and work-life balance, and Silicon Valley occupies the other, driven by the endless pursuit of wealth and success, **where does Armenia fit on this spectrum?**

## Mixing Silicon Valley with Croatia in Yerevan

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According to Suren, **both of these approaches to life have a hold in Armenia!**

There is a strong pull towards community and traditions. Family and hanging out with friends are huge in Armenia. That side of things definitely feels closer to the Croatian mindset, where joy is found in human connections rather than constant productivity.

But then, you’ve got this other energy brewing, especially with the younger generation and the tech scene taking off. You see that ambition, that drive to build something big, to make an impact. In that sense, there’s a definite pull towards Silicon Valley. **Suren believes it’s good but not yet optimal.**



He feels that if Armenians could adopt Silicon Valley's work ethic while also embracing Croatia's lifestyle balance, it would be ideal. However, in his view, **Armenia is currently far from Silicon Valley's level**, and much work remains to be done to get there. The challenge for Armenia is whether it can cherry-pick the best of both worlds without losing its cultural authenticity in the process.

He believes the solution requires a cultural shift, and open mind and mentorship. **Armenian founders need more exposure to Silicon Valley's playbook**, not to copy it blindly, but to adapt its best principles. That's why he's attracting US talent to his company in Armenia to infuse that spirit into his team.

The goal isn't to turn Yerevan into Palo Alto, but to **create a hybrid model where ambitions and quality of life coexist**. In fact, organizing the event to introduce the pirates of Silicon Valley and the MPA concept was one step in this direction.

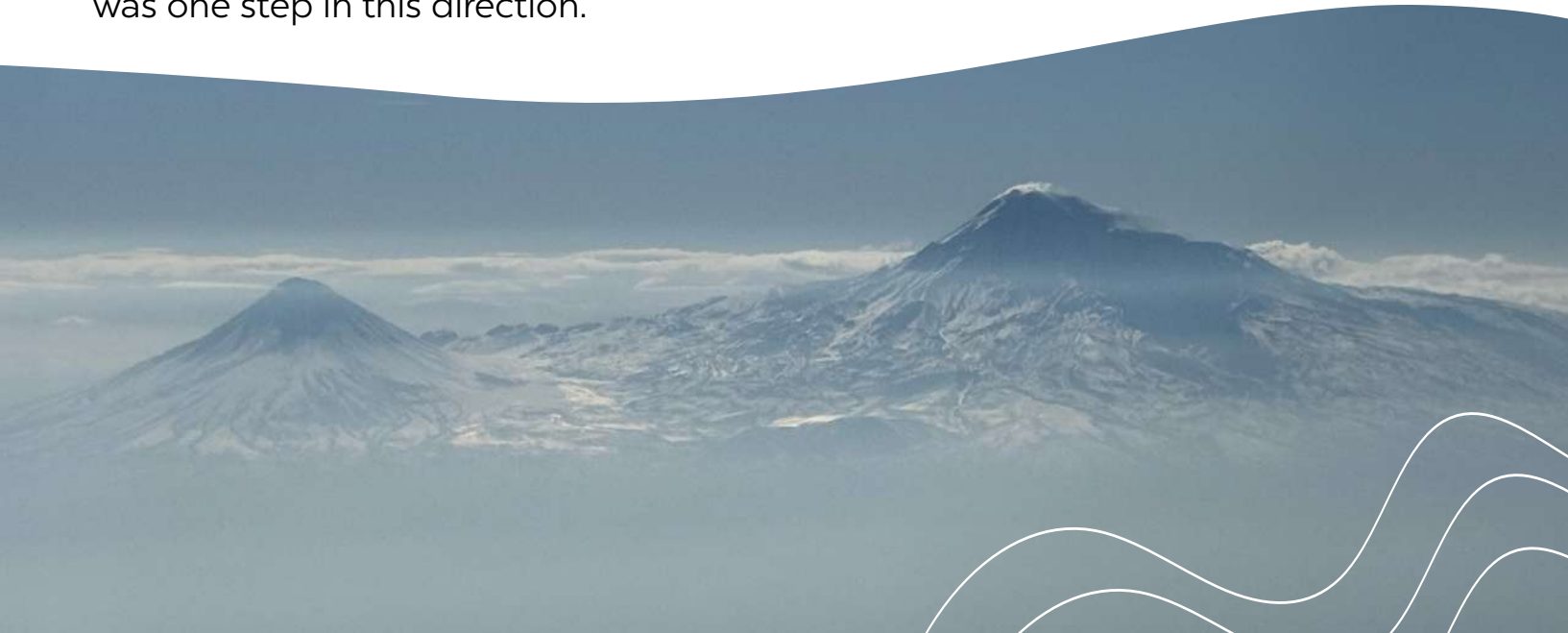
## Armenia Needs Real Pirates

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Pirates don't win by playing fair—they win by being faster, smarter, and more adaptable. Armenia, despite its small size, has a strong tech sector, but to compete globally, it **needs more founders who think like pirates**—unafraid to disrupt industries, experiment, and take calculated risks.

Although he joked about launching the "Pirate School" I wouldn't be surprised to see him cutting its red ribbon one day in Yerevan, teaching startup founders how to think disruptively while maintaining their Armenian identity.

But it's not just about founders. The government, investors, and educational institutions must collaborate. In other words, everyone should be part of the piracy ecosystem. Perhaps even **government officials need to attend the school and receive their MPAs** from Suren.







## Stay Tuned for Next Month

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In the Golden Age of Piracy, captains who lost their crew's trust faced a brutal exit strategy: they had to “walk the plank” straight to the sharks. Today's founders who fail in leadership are overthrown by boards, investors, or their own teams. Think of what happened a few months ago at OpenAI.

Many buccaneers, like today's founders, received backing. Some were even government-funded privateers, much like startups today might secure government grants or initiatives. Others relied on wealthy merchants (the angel investors of the 1500s) who saw potential for lucrative returns. The game hasn't changed—only the treasure!

Consider this just a glimpse into an insightful presentation packed with numbers, statistics, and real-life stories that connect the world of pirates and startup founders – you can read all about it in next month's issue of Life in Armenia.



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REIMAGINING COMMERCIAL SPACES

# THE LEED ADVANTAGE FOR TECH COMPANIES IN ARMENIA



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**VESSELA  
VALTCHEVA-MCGEE**

Director of Market Development in  
Eastern Europe at GBCI Europe



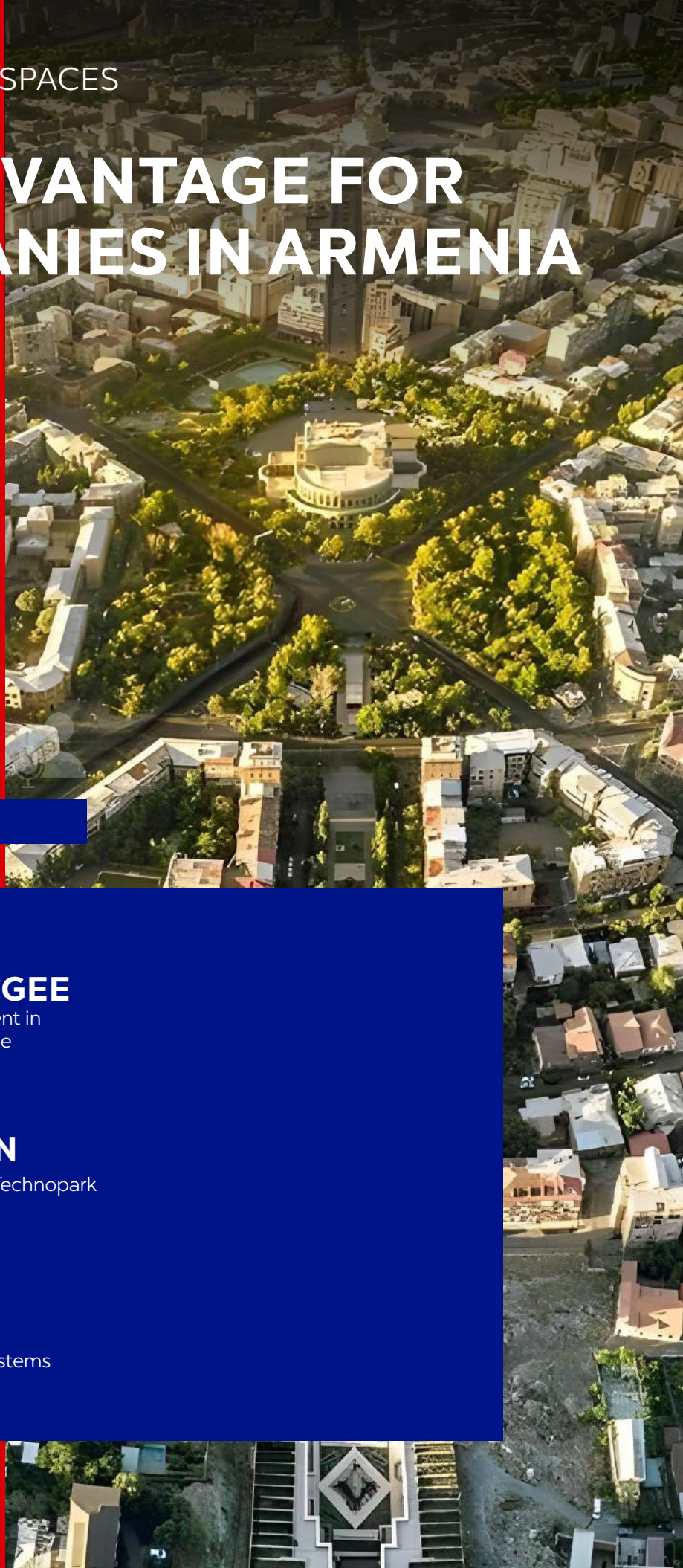
**HAYK  
TER-TACHATYAN**

Operations Director at Dalan Technopark



**MARINE  
PETROSYAN**

Project Manager at Energy Systems

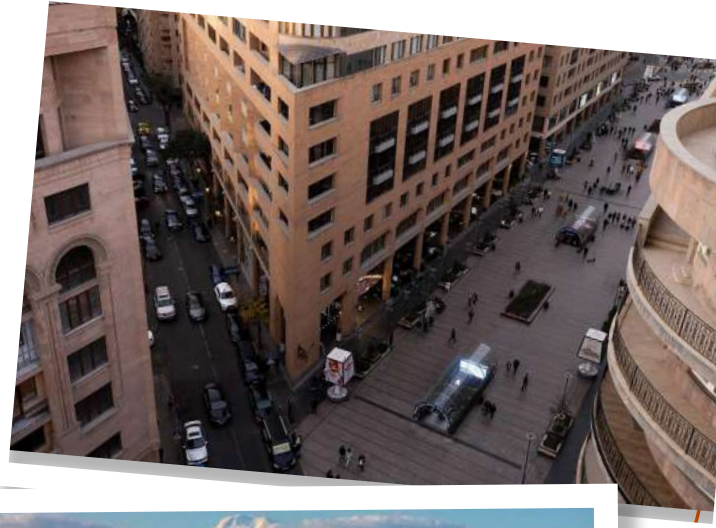




## REIMAGINING COMMERCIAL SPACES

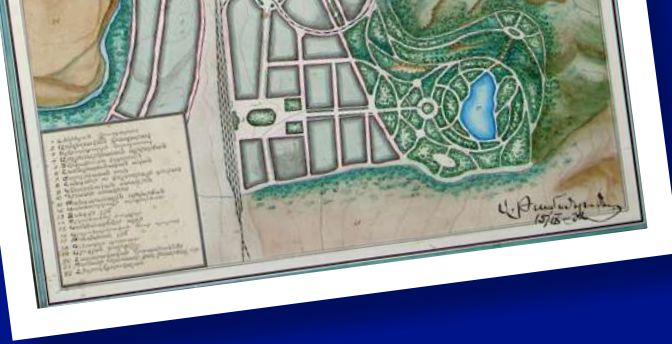
### THE LEED ADVANTAGE FOR TECH COMPANIES IN ARMENIA

When architect and urban planner Alexander Tamanyan planned Yerevan in the 1920s, he adopted a climate-responsive urban design, long before modern sustainability frameworks existed! He built Yerevan in circles and implemented a radial-ring network of streets to facilitate transportation and link the city center to its districts while maintaining his vision of Yerevan as a garden city. He architected an air corridor system to channel cool downdrafts from the surrounding Hrazdan Gorge and Mount Aragats into the urban core. That explains why Yerevan residents enjoy a cool summer breeze despite their city being surrounded by mountains.



In recent years, Yerevan has experienced fluctuating air pollution levels, influenced by urbanization, construction, and infrastructure projects, as well as transportation and industrial activities. These levels frequently exceed WHO-recommended limits for PM2.5 and PM10, particularly in winter when heating emissions and temperature inversions trap pollutants.





As the city faces these challenges, Tamanyan's futuristic approach offers a blueprint for sustainable solutions that could be renewed through modern frameworks like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a globally recognized green building rating system developed by the [U.S. Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](#).



LEED provides a framework for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining **resource and energy-efficient, high-performing, healthy, and cost-effective buildings and communities**. Adopting LEED certification could preserve Tamanyan's vision while addressing Yerevan's worsening air pollution and urban heat island effect.



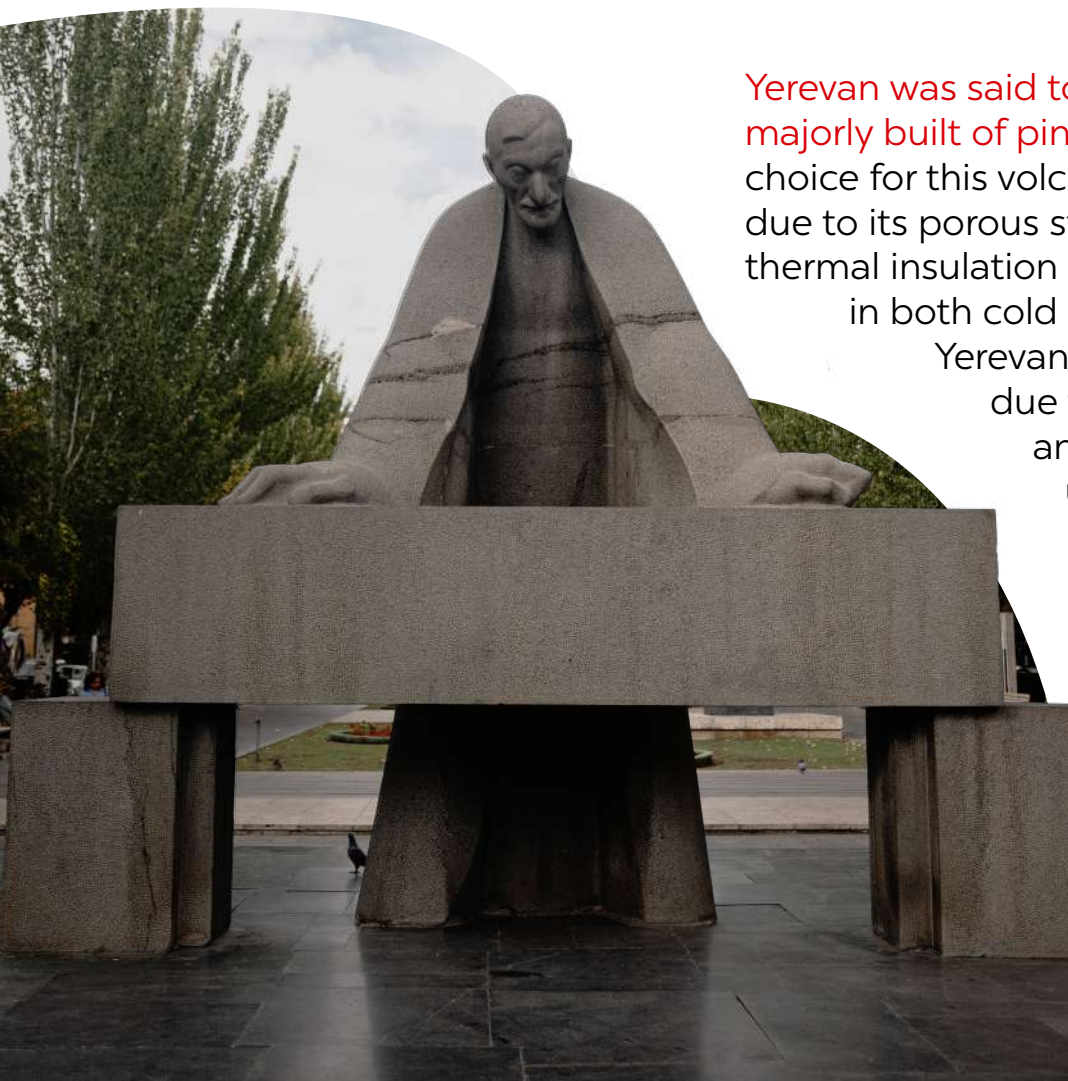


# The Synergy of Tamanyan's Plan and LEED

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Tamanyan's air corridors channel cool air from the surrounding hills into the city. LEED-certified buildings can complement this by **optimizing natural ventilation and reducing heat emissions** through energy-efficient technology, green roofs,

high-reflective roofing materials, energy-efficient facades, shading infrastructures (like trees), and renewable infrastructure over open-space parking and other open areas, which aligns with the LEED Heat Island Reduction credit for enhanced ventilation.



Yerevan was said to be the first city to be **majorly built of pink tuff stones**. Tamanyan's choice for this volcanic stone was probably due to its porous structure, which provides thermal insulation and regulates temperature in both cold and hot climates. Today, Yerevan's temperatures are rising due to excessive concrete and asphalt, worsening the urban heat island effect. Additionally, many of Yerevan's buildings have metal roofs, which **not only absorb extreme temperatures but also reflect heat back into the air**, contributing to thermal pollution.

Cities like Yerevan tend to be warmer than their surrounding rural areas, a phenomenon known as the urban heat island (UHI) effect. By using high-reflectivity materials, LEED buildings can significantly reduce the amount of heat absorbed at the building and ground level. Implementing LEED-compliant roofs in Yerevan could reduce temperatures, especially during the summer.

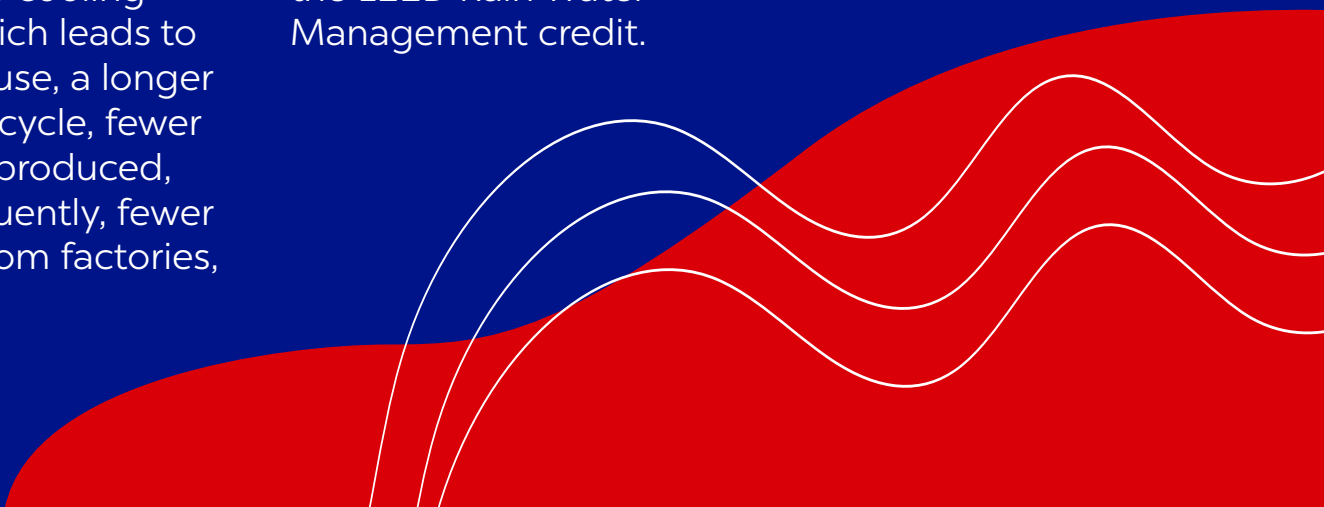
Tamanyan was mindful of the city's climate and the health of the city's residents, **planning a circular parkland area around the city with fountains**, swimming pools, and playgrounds for children. Gardens and trees, in general, serve as natural air conditioners. They provide shade and shelter and mitigate extreme heat waves. This decreases the expenses for cooling systems, which leads to less energy use, a longer product life cycle, fewer units being produced, and consequently, fewer emissions from factories, and so on.

This is an important consideration for Yerevan! Gardens, parks, and more green spaces in the concrete outer layer of our city will help **prevent street flooding from rain and reduce heat reflection from the ground**. LEED has several environmental credits under the Sustainable Sites category that encourage green spaces around buildings. For example, the LEED Open Space credit often requires at least 30% of the total site area to be open space, and **25% of that open space must be planted with diverse vegetation** or have a vegetated canopy. Another example is permeable pavement, which is the technique of leaving spaces between porous blocks to let the rainwater drain down the surface, which goes under the LEED Rain Water Management credit.

LEED principles aim to reverse contributions to global climate change, enhance individual human health and well-being, protect and restore water resources, safeguard and revitalize biodiversity and ecosystem services, promote sustainable and regenerative material resource cycles, foster a greener economy, and enhance social equity, environmental justice, community health, and overall quality of life.

Tamanyan's master plan for Yerevan focused on garden city principles, a radial-circular layout, emphasis on public spaces, views of Mount Ararat, functional zoning, and attention to climate.

If you think about it for a minute, you will notice the clear overlap in their underlying goals.







## Evaluating LEED's Environmental Footprint in Yerevan

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While international sustainability standards for construction sound promising, **the main question is implementation**. Do they translate to tangible environmental benefits, or are they only superficial marketing tools?

To learn more, I contacted [Hayk Ter-Tachatyan](#), Operations Director at [Dalan Technopark](#), a business complex that aims to become the first LEED-certified commercial building in Armenia, and [Marine Petrosyan](#), Project Manager at [Energy Systems](#), an Armenian-based company that provides consultation and monitoring to Dalan Technopark on its LEED certification journey.

I wanted to learn about the impact LEED has on the building to evaluate how beneficial it is and whether it actually aligns with Tamanyan's vision for Yerevan. For context, **Dalan**

**Technopark is 110 meters tall and will be the largest building in Armenia**, with a gross construction volume of 155,000 square meters. Therefore, it's a massive project that touches many aspects of the local environment and needs to be planned carefully.

Mr. Ter-Tachatyan and I reviewed a few reports about LEED's impact on their building at his office for more than three hours. I learned that Dalan Technopark, like other LEED-certified buildings, has the potential to contribute 50% less to greenhouse gas emissions through water use, 48% less through solid waste reduction, and 5% less through vehicle use. He also informed me that if Dalan Technopark achieves the LEED GOLD certification level (their anticipated goal), **the building will save 48% of its electricity consumption**.

Along with other prerequisites, Dalan Technopark carefully monitors the implementation of the “Construction Activity Pollution Prevention” prerequisite requirements, including but not limited to topsoil preservation, special drainage system equipment along the project perimeter and periodic renovation, minimizing dust by maintaining a crushed stone layer on applicable areas and using sprinkler machines nearby main construction processes. With these measures, Dalan Technopark preserves the site’s flora, fauna, and workers’ health. By constructing and regularly updating perimeter drainage, contamination of the surrounding soil layers is prevented by excluding the discharge of contaminated water from the construction area without filtration.

Dalan Technopark plans to install a special container for rainwater collection. The collected water will be used for irrigation purposes. The water storage tank volume is currently calculated according to the historical rainfall data specific to Yerevan. The roof of Dalan Technopark will be covered with solar panels and a special thermal protection material with a high reflective rate, and the open area of the building will be **greened according to the principle of heat island reduction.**





We discussed many other details about how the building could reduce its environmental footprint and contribute to the lives of Yerevan's inhabitants. If Dalan Technopark aims to pursue LEED, its impact on the environment can scale up to the entire city, as LEED certification becomes a leading green building approach.

This is critical in a country where data indicated an annual increase exceeding 40% in the tech sector in 2023. **Longer-term trends show an average growth of 20-25% annually** over the past decade. There are now over 1,250 active tech companies in Armenia, with the majority of them in the capital, Yerevan. Notably,

more companies and international small and medium-sized players will establish themselves in Armenia over time. This increase in businesses will **naturally lead to more offices and construction.**

Besides its impact on the city, a key point to consider is the effect of such certification on the lives of those working in LEED-certified buildings.



# LEEDing the Way to a Better Life for Tech Workers

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Tech professionals often spend long hours indoors coding, collaborating, and problem-solving. The design and operational standards of LEED buildings **directly influence their mental health, well-being, efficiency, and job satisfaction.**

Tech employees in LEED-certified offices benefit from superior indoor air quality, **thanks to strict ventilation standards and low-VOC** (volatile organic compound) materials in paints, carpets, and furniture. Poor air quality can cause headaches, fatigue, and reduced concentration, which are common issues in poorly ventilated tech hubs. LEED-satisfactory indoor air quality helps ensure the safety of people with respiratory health issues.

Many LEED buildings prioritize daylight optimization through **strategic window placement and open layouts.** For tech workers staring at screens all day, access to natural light reduces eye strain, headaches, and circadian rhythm disruptions. LEED's Daylight and Quality Views credits encourage designs that maximize sunlight. LEED requires **open views for all workstations with moving scenery** (usually when working people stare out of the window, the moving objects help concentrate) or relax the mind and eyes.

LEED-certified spaces maintain consistent thermal comfort through advanced HVAC systems and smart temperature zoning. Office employees often debate office temperatures, but LEED standards help maintain an ideal balance with multi-stage thermal regulation and metering.

Tech jobs can be mentally taxing, and LEED's emphasis on biophilic design—incorporating greenery, natural materials, open-air recreation facilities, and outdoor views—helps reduce stress and enhance creativity.





LEED doesn't just focus on sustainability—it also encourages high-performance buildings with stable power, efficient cooling for servers, and resilient infrastructure. For tech companies, this means **fewer disruptions due to overheating equipment or power inefficiencies**, ensuring smoother workflows.

Additionally, LEED requires proximity to essential destinations such as banks, health centers, government offices, bus stops, grocery stores, and other shopping centers. This infrastructure **should be within walking or biking distance to minimize driving time.**

## Why LEED Matters for Armenia's Future

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To confirm my findings further, I contacted [Vessela Valtcheva-McGee](#), Director of Market Development in Eastern Europe at [GBCI](#) Europe.

Since Armenia is very focused on attracting foreign tech companies to establish HQs, **I asked how adopting LEED-certified office spaces aligns with such efforts.**

Ms. Valtcheva-McGee explained that with LEED buildings, foreign companies, investors, and occupants know that the building has been demonstrated to be built to high standards, meet business goals, and comply with local regulations. It helps companies use fewer resources, reduce operational costs, and be

more resilient to weather events that impact businesses and their assets, so they are better prepared and can mitigate business loss.

While green building certifications may entail initial investments and potential cash flow challenges, landlords can mitigate these through Opex savings and explore avenues like green financing for Capex requirements. Green Capex investments not only enhance asset value but also align with investor preferences for sustainable assets. The report warns that non-green buildings could face insurance underwriting challenges, further incentivizing the adoption of green building certification in real estate.

I also asked what difference it would make for tech employees to work in a LEED-certified building. Ms.

Valtcheva-McGee demonstrated that LEED is a holistic green building program that provides projects with a framework to design, build, and operate more sustainable and healthier buildings. LEED buildings support occupant health and wellness, which leads to happier and more productive employees.

She also shared that a [2018 survey by the U.S. Green Building Council](#) found that Employees who work in LEED-certified buildings are happier, healthier, and more productive than employees in conventional and non-LEED buildings. Additionally, the same survey found that employees prefer to work for a company with a strong, concrete mission and positive values, leading to higher retention rates.

Given Armenia's current lack of LEED certified commercial buildings, I wanted to know what opportunities she sees for early LEED adopters in the commercial real estate market.

LEED is the most widely used green building rating system with more than 120,000 certified projects. Projects around the world have used LEED to demonstrate a building's dedication to minimizing its environmental impact and promoting healthier, more efficient structures. They also demonstrate that LEED is a good investment for assets seeking to stand out among other buildings. Across global markets, LEED-certified buildings have higher occupancy rates, increase property value, and command higher rents.

Ms. Valtcheva-McGee shared that there is currently one LEED Silver certified school project in Armenia to date (Avedisian High School, certified by Energy Systems) and five projects registered under the LEED Building Design and Construction rating system. Three of the five registrations took place in the last couple of years, with project construction timelines taking 18 – 24 months on average, they can expect a few more certifications to be completed soon.

As with most emerging markets, once a few leading developers certify their buildings, others will follow. Additionally, GBCI Europe has grown, and the team has added a dedicated market development director for Eastern Europe, providing emerging markets like Armenia with education and awareness of the market to support the uptake of LEED.





LEED certification alone won't bring Tamanyan's vision for Yerevan to life. Much work has to be done on the public and private levels before we can see the garden city he envisioned and planned. However, as more construction projects consider international standards for workplace or even residential projects, we'll be getting closer.

I am thankful to my good friend and Life in Armenia contributor [Vahram Elagoz](#) for all the insights he shared with me over the years about Yerevan's architecture and Tamanyan's vision for this beautiful garden city.





A POEM BORN IN YEREVAN

# AN ENGLISHMAN'S LOVE FOR ARMENIA



**ROBERT  
LENNARD**

IT & CYBER SALES & RELATIONSHIP MANAGER



## A POEM BORN IN YEREVAN AN ENGLISHMAN'S LOVE FOR ARMENIA

It feels like I was almost destined to discover Armenia.

Many years ago, I found myself in an Armenian restaurant in West London, UK, which sparked my love of the food. Later, when I lived in Switzerland, I met and got to know the world-renowned artist [Tigran Tsitoghdzian](#).

However, things took a huge leap forward in 2022, when I was fortunate to join one of Armenia's many up-and-coming companies, [EasyDmarc](#), which has quickly become one of the world's leading providers of email security and deliverability solutions. Later that year, I was invited to Yerevan to spend a couple of weeks getting to know the whole team and experience the city's beauty and sites for myself.

Like many other Brits, I grew up in the UK and [almost never heard anything about Armenia](#). Many friends and family members were quite surprised at how excited I was to be going somewhere they knew next to nothing about.



So why was I so excited? Well, apart from the fact that I enjoyed working with so many brilliant and friendly people and was therefore naturally really looking forward to meeting with them in person, there were other reasons.

As soon as I knew I was going, I started doing a lot of research into the language, culture, and sites of Armenia. Having lived for many years in the mountains of Switzerland, I was naturally first drawn to the highlands and, of course, the chance to see the spectacular views of Mount Ararat from all over Yerevan city. Less obvious, however, were the **connections between the Valais (where I lived) in Switzerland and Armenia**.

The mountains are the obvious connection, but the Valais is also the home of the Swiss wine and apricot industries. The story goes that apricots and many of their rarest grape varieties were brought back to Switzerland after the Crusades (most likely from Persia and the Caucasus). I had also been looking into my family history, and it suggested that [genetic markers pointed to origins in the Caucasus](#).



Spoiler alert, I wasn't disappointed. In fact, [I fell in love almost instantly with the place](#) and very quickly felt almost like I was home. From the food (especially the fruits) to the wine, from the spectacularly beautiful countryside to the stunning architecture of Yerevan, from the warmth and incredible hospitality of the people to their inspiring innovation and work ethic, [Armenia delights and impresses at every turn](#).

I am not a regular writer, but I do, from time to time, get inspired to compose a short poem. A few days into my stay, I was walking around Republic Square, and suddenly, [lines and lines of ideas were filling my head](#). So I rushed back to my hotel to write it all down. Well, I say rushed. It was September in Yerevan, so spectacularly warm, but I knew I had to get it all out as quickly as possible before I forgot.



Minutes later, I had drafted what I realised was the perfect way to say thank you to the team at EasyDmarc and the city as a whole for helping me feel more at home than anywhere I had ever visited in the world.

I am currently planning my next trip out to Yerevan, and this time **I can't wait to take in so much more** of what this amazing and inspiring country has to offer.



In this city full of endless cars,  
I came to see an event about Mars,  
But then I discovered so much more,  
A land with a constant threat of war,  
And yet your strength and pride shine through,  
Your art and culture it is true,  
So unique, it does inspire,  
A visitor to so admire,  
Your spirit, your creativity,  
Abounds across this pink city.  
Return, I will, I'm sure of that.  
To this Country of Wine and Stones, afoot Ararat.

Thank you does not seem enough,  
To express my new and endless love.  
Instead, I'll say as I depart,  
With you all forever in my heart,  
To the people of this hidden gem,  
Shat shnorhakal em



# TECH EVENTS



with

ARTAK N. G.



TECH BLOGGER

**MAY 2**

PHUSE Single Day Event” by Gurus CRO



**MAY 7**

Gen AI meetup



**MAY 7**

Trends in Machine Learning Research by YerevaNN



**MAY 7**

Info Session for hackathon on “RoboDron” by ISTC



**MAY 15**

Silicon Mountains Lori Forum by UEICT



**MAY 20-21**

Affiliate conference



**MAY 24**

AWS community day by AWS Armenian users group



**MAY 24**

Grant Pitch by The Premium Club



**MAY 24**

Bridging Neuroscience and AI





CHOOSING ARMENIA THEN AND NOW

# A FRENCH WOMAN'S PATH TO BECOMING ARMENIAN BY CHOICE



**CAROLINE  
CONSTENT**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT  
CONSULTANT



## CHOOSING ARMENIA THEN AND NOW A FRENCH WOMAN'S PATH TO BECOMING ARMENIAN BY CHOICE

No, it wasn't love at first sight!

When Mathew asked me if I would like to participate in Life in Armenia Magazine, I was both excited about the idea and honored, as I am a huge fan of his work, but at the same time, I was wondering if I wasn't going to be perceived as an impostor!

What could I talk about? When I am asked what makes me love living in Armenia, it is difficult to pin down! It combines people's warmth and easy connections, tasty food, beautiful landscapes, ancient culture, unique language, amazing and diverse music, and incredible talents in all spheres. We all agree on that, but it was "déjà vu." I had to find another angle.

Born in France during the Baby-Boomer decades, I couldn't claim being a digital nomad, but after second thoughts, I could at least tick the nomad box, having lived and worked for the last 19 years in Algeria, Niger, Ivory-Coast, Iran, Ethiopia, Mayotte, and of course Armenia!

**I landed in the old Zvartsnots terminal in September 2009.** As soon as I reached out with my suitcase, I got surrounded by bees shouting "Taxi, Taxi ..." I engaged negotiations in the most limited way: "how much?" as no one spoke any other English. The initially announced price to get to Republic Square was \$20.





Competition was fierce among all drivers, and once I was offered a 5 US\$ ride, we went off. On the first right turn out of the airport, the taxi sign fell off the roof. And that was my first introduction to Armenia's parallel economy. The road to the center was lined with endless casinos, one of which had a huge Eiffel Tower; arriving from Paris, that was quite funny.

I had come to Armenia -initially on a 3-month contract, as a marketing & communications consultant for Orange (the French telecom group), which had bought a license and was preparing to launch its mobile operation. On the first morning, I was patiently waiting for the team, but I soon came to realize Armenians were not early birds. At 9:00 am, the streets were still empty, and there was no open coffee shop, so I was carrying my coffee mug to the office, which seemed very unusual.

(I am making a note here as something that surprises me to this day: As opposed to Paris, for example, **you never see**

**anyone in Yerevan (nor anywhere else) eating on the streets.** I've always wondered why: Is it because Armenians never rush? It's true that to this day, I always pass them while I am walking!)

Although the company's official language was English, the level was very poor, and my challenge was to navigate in daily meetings held mostly in Russian (the Marketing Director was from Moldova) and Armenian. Listening to the team talking, I always felt they were arguing, and I found the Armenian language very harsh to the ear. One more difficult task was having marketing English translated into Armenian for our advertisements: Our straight-to-the-point headlines turned into three to four full, non-sexy, detailed lines. What a headache! We would go through endless discussions with the agency until very late at night every day.

Eventually, we launched, and I can proudly say that our Orange mobile internet services significantly brought a

positive change to the country. It was 'only' 3G then, but it shook the competition and reshaped the landscape for future generations. I saw this phenomenon happening in other emerging countries where I've lived: Wherever the internet started spreading, new generations got access to limitless knowledge. As a matter of fact, consequently, today, **Armenians (at least in Yerevan and Gyumri) speak perfect English.**

In 2010, Armenia faced a severe economic crisis, and unfortunately, many of my young colleagues, wishing for themselves and their families a better life, left for the US. Although I couldn't blame them, each departure was breaking my heart. I started questioning myself: how can you be a patriot to your country if you are leaving it, when it is exposed to such threats? How can a country exist if its population vanishes? I guess that's **how my own roots started growing into the Armenian soil.**

Slowly, change started to emerge. As a tech company, Orange was organizing challenges, and the young generation's creativity was noticeable. Tumo opened its first center, the Sevan Startup Summit started showcasing an incredible entrepreneurship vitality, and the first co-working spaces opened. They were quite small and popular amongst early adopters, but it was an interesting move. Would it turn into a long-term trend, or would it just disappear? I bet no one had any idea! It was **a spontaneous move with a “let’s see what happens” mindset.**

In June 2012, my contract had come to an end, and I had to leave Armenia for another assignment, but it was clear I would be back. I had just started (finally!) learning Armenian, so as I kept coming in between jobs, I kept meeting with my teacher to practice. Then, I would watch Armenian TV channels; not the best to catch proper language! TV series were mostly showcasing the darkest sides of society: Domestic violence, gangs, and mafia-like stuff!

It was when I came back in 2016 that I felt a deep change. First for me: After having visited many flats over the past years, I eventually found one I fell in love with. Since it was in a nice but old stone building, it had to be fully renovated; it took me 18 months to have the renovation completed. To be honest, it had become a nightmare, and being a woman (with still a low level of Armenian) wasn't helping. The way it ended: I totally lost my temper and moved in without having a kitchen (It eventually got installed).

As for the country, I believe the availability of 4G (and Armenia's quite flexible working laws) accelerated the change: Remote work with companies, mostly located in the US, started to emerge. It meant dealing with big time differences, but also with better work perspectives and higher salaries. Gradually, **a new mindset started spreading in the new generation**, and I felt a huge difference in skillsets, their ability to tackle challenges, take responsibility for their own destiny, and get inspired by businesses flourishing in other countries.







Until then, it was usual for young people to accumulate up to three jobs to make ends meet. Although it is still a common phenomenon in some spheres of society, the rise and fast development of tourism and IT have undeniably changed lives. And then, of course, COVID imposed new ways of working and managing businesses.

The events that brought so many Russians to Armenia only emphasized the process. Every single café has **now become a digital nomads & remote workers wonderland**. The new uniform is cool streetwear, a natural look, headphones, and a laptop, including for girls. So funny when I think back on insane high heels, skinny jeans, and over-makeup girls used to wear in previous years.

When I came back in 2022 at the end of my contract in Mayotte, I found myself faced with a difficult question: When I first came to Armenia, expertise in marketing & communications was scarce. Now, any Gen X,Y,Z was a digital marketing expert. I started feeling I had become a dinosaur in a land I didn't belong to anymore. I was OK as I had earned a good living during my career, but what could I be busy with, choosing to live mostly in Armenia? Not only as a living, but also to contribute? And as a foreigner in a country where people of my age have lived in Soviet times, how could I make new friends?



I started with a contribution: Thanks to an Armenian friend from the US, I joined a charity organization (**IWAY-International Women Association of Yerevan**), whose members are all volunteers and are doing an amazing work improving the lives of the most vulnerable communities (mainly women and children) in villages in bordering regions. It is really gratifying to see **how even a small organization like ours can make an impact**.



Thanks to IWAY, I got acquainted with Armenians who had repatriated from various countries, including Syria and Lebanon. Hearing some of their stories deepened my belonging to Armenia and my eagerness to “do something” and be “part of it”. This is how, in 2020, I decided to “become” Armenian and applied for citizenship. Having no Armenian roots, I had to go through the “non-easy process”, meaning I had to take a test about the Armenian Constitution (Those who have Armenian roots apply through a “parz”, ie, an easy process). To my huge surprise and even bigger disappointment, I was denied citizenship (although I had gotten 100% correct answers on the 33 test questions!).

No explanation, just a text message saying my application had been rejected. This wasn't going to be the end, so after COVID, I applied again. I spent another full day standing in line at OVIR. By the end of their working day, I had gotten the paperwork and the test done, and this time the test had been about the new Constitution! Three months later (the wait had been 6 months before), I got informed, still by text message, that I was granted citizenship! I was soooooooooo happy! My only disappointment was on the day I received my Armenian passport: I had anticipated with excitement that I would be swearing on the Bible my dedication to my new country. But it didn't happen. It was a time when loads of Armenians who had flown back from Russia were applying for citizenship, so I guess it would have taken too long to conduct the ceremony. Anyways, the most important thing was that I was holding an Armenian Passport!

I'd be lying if I said all is perfect, even though many positive changes are noticeable.





Armored behind an official narrative of becoming a modern capital (I won't mention other real causes), Yerevan has been losing its soul over the years, skyscrapers replacing its historical 3 to 5 stories houses and buildings in all parts of the city. As someone who has been here long enough, I am sad to witness a lack of vision in protecting architectural gems when tourism is one of the major income streams.

On the contrary, I was **happy to see Gyumri undergo a strong "renaissance"**. Not only had it become a great place to spend a weekend (2hours10 mn from Yerevan using the newest "Fast Train") but it had also turned into a hype place to work, thanks to companies like Herbs & Honey, Digital Pomegranate (the first IT company who believed in the potential of Gyumri's talents), Tumo- thanks to whom the magnificent Gyumri theatre-which had been destroyed in the 1988 earthquake,

came back to life, and then other businesses coming along, offering many great job opportunities, preventing "Gyumretsiner" (inhabitants of Gyumri) from moving out. Somehow, time seems to have frozen in other remote regions. Is it good or bad? As the English would say: "That Is The Question", and I can't bring an answer to that one.

Nevertheless, and no matter the small deceptions I've had to cope with, I've always looked at the bright side of the coin, understanding what this country has gone through. And I will always remember my Dad (a very wise man), when he came with my Mum to visit me for a few days in early December 2009, saying: "We should send to Armenia all the French people complaining about their conditions, so that they would understand how lucky they are to be benefiting from the French system".

As a final note, I keep being amazed by the spirit and vitality that I see now all around! I constantly feel an incredible energy, creativity and growing entrepreneurship mindset. I love getting acquainted with these young adults, boys and girls, following their success stories. **I must admit I sometimes dream of becoming one of them.** Maybe that's why I started training and became an enthusiastic AI and no-code learner.

Just a couple of days ago, while I was talking to a friend as I was boarding a plane for a trip to France, she said to me, "You must be happy to come back!" I think she didn't expect my answer, as I replied, **"Honestly? No! I really love living in Armenia"** And I am thrilled to be back soon!

The one thing that is still on my to-do list is to organize a trip to Armenia for my friends and family **so they get a little taste of what keeps me here.**

THE SMART MOVE

# EXPANDING YOUR OUTSOURCING OPERATION TO ARMENIA



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**LUSINE  
KARAPETYAN**

Co-Founder of South Gate Ventures

INTERVIEWING



**ARTHUR  
EOLYAN**

Co-Founder of South Gate Ventures



**JAMES  
MEADS**

Consultant and Procurement  
Technology Expert





## THE SMART MOVE EXPANDING YOUR OUTSOURCING OPERATION TO ARMENIA

Armenia offers an opportunity for international companies looking to expand their operations outside the Eurozone, while maintaining proximity to Europe.

In his [speech](#) at the Bansko Nomad Fest in Bulgaria last year, Mr. [James Meads](#), a British consultant and procurement technology expert with global experience, introduced the concept of a “Plan B” in light of current international developments, **where risk planning is no longer optional**.

He encouraged those considering relocating to avoid the typical common destinations, and instead choose countries that are rich in natural resources, food and energy secure, not heavily in debt, have a young population, have an economically liberal economy, have a territorial tax system, are peaceful and neutral, and have crime stats that are moving in the right direction.



In his presentation, Mr. Meads emphasized the importance of monitoring some basic economic data. This includes the debt-to-GDP ratio—a key economic metric that compares a country’s public debt to its gross domestic product (GDP), and whether a government’s spending and pension commitments are within its means or trending in the right direction. He advised businesses and individuals to consider a government’s financial solvency in their operational and target countries.



All the factors Mr. Meads mentioned in his presentation are **either partially or entirely true in Armenia**, making it one of the ideal destinations for a Plan B, particularly the debt-to-GDP ratio. Armenia's debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 50.3% in 2024, lower than major advanced economies like the United States (124% in 2024), Japan (216.2% in 2024), the United Kingdom (101.1% in 2024), and France (110.6% in 2024). Armenia's debt is moderate and sustainable, with less than half its GDP. **It leads to greater macroeconomic stability than highly leveraged Western economies.**

In 2023, Mr. Meads visited Armenia to evaluate its potential as a second base for those considering relocation. When I asked him about his thoughts on Armenia, he shared that it's **a great hedge for anyone who wants a safe, open country with geopolitical exposure to non-EU, non-NATO countries as part of their flag theory.**

As you might be new to the term, a “No-Flag” jurisdiction refers to a country that maintains political neutrality, avoids entanglement in international sanctions, and sustains balanced diplomatic and economic relations across major global blocs—including the West, Eastern powers, and the Global South. This neutrality allows businesses to serve diverse markets—including the EU, U.S., Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and Middle East—without exposure to secondary sanctions or trade restrictions.

Armenia's corporate tax structure is highly competitive, with rates ranging from 9% to 20%, and **certain IT companies benefiting from a 0% tax on reinvested profits**. The country has also established double taxation treaties with more than 40 nations, including key European countries, China, and the UAE. The banking sector is stable and well-regulated by the Central Bank of Armenia, with no capital restrictions, allowing for the repatriation of profits. Additionally, **Armenia's partially dollarized economy helps mitigate foreign exchange risks**, particularly for businesses with contracts denominated in USD.





# Why Outsource to Armenia

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Armenia's tech industry has grown remarkably, with recent data indicating an annual increase exceeding 40% in 2023. Longer-term trends show **an average growth of 20-25% annually over the past decade**. There are now over 1,250 active tech companies operating in Armenia, including subsidiaries of Siemens, Synopsys, Nvidia, and others.

I reached out to Ms. [Lusine Karapetyan](#) and Mr. [Arthur Eolyan](#), Co-founders of [South Gate Ventures](#), a Luxembourg-based investment management and administration company with subsidiary offices in Yerevan, Armenia, and San Francisco, U.S., with over 120 mln USD in assets under administration. They have **recently relocated investment structures and international tech companies to Armenia**, and I wanted to learn more about their motivation and expectations.

I wanted to know, based on their experience, **what would attract an international tech business to relocate its core operations to Armenia**. According to Ms. Karapetyan, Armenia is a smart move for companies looking to scale globally without the heavy costs. Companies could get world-class engineering talent, tax advantages built for innovation, and a government putting capital behind innovation, not just policy papers.



She shared that over the past few years, Armenia has leaned hard into building its tech economy. Software development, engineering, and IT services have seen real growth, powered by a skilled, affordable workforce and a deep tradition in science and engineering. This isn't a "hopeful" bet - it's **a country producing steady pipelines of highly educated professionals ready to build.**

The macro numbers back it up. Armenia's economy grew by an intense 12.6% rate in 2022, then cooled slightly to 8.3% in 2023 and 5.9% in 2024 - yet a sign of healthy normalization, not retreat. Inflation has stayed under control, averaging just around 3-4% over the past three years, and the financial sector is modern, stable, and internationally connected.

Strategically, Armenia bridges Europe and Asia, and through its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), opens doors to a market of over 180 million consumers. Infrastructure projects like [Engineering City](#) show the country's commitment to building not just the talent, but also **the deeptech backbone future industries will need.** On top of that, the 7-million-strong Armenian diaspora creates a built-in network for capital, partnerships, and global scale.



## Lusine Karapetyan

Co-founder of South Gate Ventures

Through our Venture Hub Yerevan initiative, operated by South Gate, we created a one-stop platform for innovative entrepreneurs and international investors, providing venture services, capital connections, and expansion channels into global markets. Partnering closely with the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, we're helping drive the reforms, making Armenia one of the region's most attractive and dynamic places to build."

Setting up in Armenia is fast. Ownership rules are simple. Profits move freely. Salaries and operational costs are a fraction of what you'd pay in the U.S. or Europe. No restrictions on sectors, hiring, remittances, or exits.





## Arthur Eolyan

Co-founder of South Gate Ventures

Armenia isn't Silicon Valley - we have our own path, and scaling can still have some rough edges. But we are quickly earning a new name: the Silicon Mountains. For founders and investors who know how to spot the next wave early, Armenia isn't just a smart play. It's a serious launchpad. The fundamentals are here. And they're only getting stronger."

Mr. Eolyan gave an example about how Poland has carved out a dual niche in Europe as both a low-cost, high-skill production hub for the automotive industry and a back-office/tech services powerhouse, riding the same underlying advantage: labour that is markedly cheaper than in Western Europe yet solidly educated and EU-compatible. He continued that Armenia has quietly become the Caucasus-region analogue to the "cheap-but-skilled" story that powered Poland's ascent a decade earlier: a small, EU-adjacent workforce whose wages are still modest by Western standards but whose technical depth keeps rising.



According to Mr. Eolyan, to reports, Russia's 2022 mobilisation sent two waves of IT professionals south; as many as 60,000 Russians were still living in Armenia in late 2023, and roughly 500 relocated Russian tech firms had registered local entities, deepening the talent pool while nudging wages upward.

The call centre/BPO niche is smaller than Poland's but growing. It is centred on Yerevan and Vanadzor, where multilingual (Russian-English-French) agents earn 35-40 percent of what their counterparts cost in Central Europe. Dozens of boutique providers—Hugo, Teleyan, SupportYourApp, and others—handle CX and back-office tasks for EU e-commerce and SaaS firms.



I wanted a clear answer on **why international investors would consider capital deployment or establishing venture capital initiatives within the Armenian market.**

Mr. Eolyan noted that Armenia is quietly building one of the most investor-friendly environments in the region, and **smart capital is starting to notice.** He explained that Armenia hit a major milestone in 2022, pulling in nearly \$1 billion in foreign direct investment, almost triple the inflows from the previous year.





According to him, the country has quietly become one of the most cost-efficient places to source “mini-CFO” or fractional-CFO support for startups and mid-market companies. A senior controller in Yerevan costs about AMD 475,000 a month—roughly \$1,200—while even top-tier chief-accountant roles at flagship corporates seldom top \$95,000 a year, versus the \$300,000-plus that a full-time CFO commands in the United States. By contrast, mainstream global fractional-CFO retainers run \$5,000-\$10,000 a month, so an Armenian-based team can deliver the same modelling, treasury and board-pack work for less than half the going rate without sacrificing bilingual professionalism.

Global networks such as Crowe & Asatryans, Schneider Group and boutique providers like Profin Consulting all run outsourced CFO desks in Yerevan, bundling FP&A, cash-flow forecasting, board reporting, and investor-relations support with routine bookkeeping and tax. Service packages start around 30,000 AMD (≈US\$75) per month for ledger work and scale up to bespoke CFO mandates, making it easy to dial support up or down as a company grows.

It was a clear signal: investor confidence is rising, driven by real reforms and a much stronger business environment. It's worth noting that some of that spike was fueled by extraordinary capital movements out of neighboring countries, as Armenia became a safe harbor during regional tensions. FDI normalized to around \$580 million in 2023 - a more sustainable number that still reflects strong, organic interest.



- 100% ownership of resident legal entities is permitted to foreigners
- Legal regime no less favorable than the one for nationals, unless a more favorable regime is provided by a respective treaty
- Companies registered by a foreign citizen in Armenia have the right to own land
- Foreign citizens can have long-term lease contracts
- No restrictions on access to almost any economic sector or geographic location within the country
- No restrictions on staff recruitment
- No restrictions on remittances or exchange of foreign currencies
- No restrictions on repatriation of profits

## What Seasoned Investors Might Miss About Armenia

Ms. Karapetyan explained that while headlines focus on Armenia's rise as a regional tech hub, one often underappreciated asset remains Armenia's legal framework, which is notably investor-friendly. The "Law on Foreign Investments" provides real protections, including guarantees against nationalization and expropriation, and allows for the free repatriation of profits. These factors collectively create an open, safe, and stable environment that seasoned investors search for in their long-term investments.

### Arthur Eolyan

Co-founder of South Gate Ventures

Back in 2021, we entered the Armenian market to launch the back office for our Luxembourg-based fund administration company. That's why we know this market inside out - not just the regulations and licensing procedures, but the unwritten rules, how the financial sector really operates, and where the opportunities lie."

**Capital isn't just welcome in Armenia—it's protected.** At the same time, global regulatory tightening and the wave of deoffshorization have created new opportunities that Armenia is perfectly positioned to capture.



# Governmental Policies and Tax Incentives to Attract Foreign Funds

When I discussed this aspect with Ms. Karapetyan, she introduced me to the current regulations and support programs. According to her, the Armenian government has **made targeted efforts to encourage foreign investment** and create a more inviting business environment for the development of the economy.

Sectors such as technology and financial services benefit from VAT exemptions. At the same time, a broader range of industries have favorable tax conditions in free economic zones and sector-specific subsidies, particularly in agriculture and IT. These measures position Armenia as a dynamic investment hub, with the IT sector playing a pivotal role in driving innovation and economic growth.

Key incentives for the high-tech sector include:

- A reduced income tax rate of 10% for salaries related to research and development activities, compared to the standard 20%.
- A turnover tax rate of just 1% for high-tech activities, down from the standard 10%.
- A 200% salary deduction for professional work in the high-tech sector, capped at 50% of the taxable base.
- Companies hiring foreign professionals can receive a 50% refund on paid income taxes.
- Companies investing in employee training and retraining programs are eligible for financial support.



A comprehensive legislative package to expand the high-tech sector is now in force. It offers support to commercial organizations and individual entrepreneurs whose revenue streams are composed of at least 90% high-tech activities.

These incentives, subject to specific conditions such as minimum employee numbers and revenue sourcing, took effect from January 1, 2025, and will remain valid through December 31, 2031.



## Lusine Karapetyan

Co-founder of South Gate Ventures

Having our offices and delivering venture services both in Europe (Luxembourg, Poland) and the U.S., we can state that Armenia offers major advantages in both time and cost aspects. The entire business setup, including all stages, can take as little as 5-7 working days for non-residents, and just 1-2 days if a resident shareholder is involved.”



Ms. Karapetyan informed me about how they launched Startup Talks and Venture Talks, a curated series of events designed to bring together Armenia’s Investors and most promising founders with global investors, strategic thinkers, and tech ecosystem leaders.

At Startup Talks, early-stage innovators get real insights from experienced venture builders and successful founders on how to scale in uncertain markets. Select startups also get the chance to pitch to a private room of accredited investors and advisors - people who don’t just write checks, but help build companies.



She explained that Venture Talks opens the floor for potential investors to explore emerging venture themes, market shifts, and long-term capital plays. It's where investors, LPs, and tech leaders from Armenia and abroad connect on what's next on the market. Their goal is to create the space for high-trust relationships to form.

After talking to Ms. Karapetyan and Mr. Eolyan, I asked them to **connect me with one of the companies they helped relocate to Armenia** so I could get a new perspective on this topic. I was introduced to Mr. Artem Smirnov, Founder of Comon Games, an award-winning software development company, focused on building digital solutions for the gaming industry.

I contacted Mr. Smirnov and asked about the main driver and strategic objective behind his company's decision to relocate operations to Armenia. He shared that when international sanctions and restrictions made it difficult for companies based in Russia to work with partners abroad, they realized they needed a new jurisdiction to keep their operations global.



**Armenia offered a great solution** - it's geographically close, legally open to foreign founders, and culturally very comfortable for them.



From the left,  
Gevorg Mantashyan, First Vice Minister  
of High Tech Industry of RA

Vahagn Khachatryan, the president  
of RA, Former Minister of High Tech  
Industry

Lusine Karapetyan, Founding CEO of  
South Gate Ventures

Hamlet Asatryan, Chief Operating  
Officer of the Armenian Businessmen  
Association



He also shared that the setup process matched their expectations. They had their preparations with the South Gate team and knew the registration itself would be fast, and it really was - **registering the company and getting tax residency status went smoothly**. However, they did experience longer-than-expected waiting times when opening a bank account, which is **something future founders should plan for**.

Armenia's investor-friendly framework creates a stable foundation for scaling operations. It's more than a contingency plan; it is a strategic alternative for tech expansion, a deliberate choice for forward-looking entrepreneurs—a Plan B, as Mr. Meads would call it, or **maybe even a Plan A** if you think about it for a minute.



## Artem Smirnov

Founder of Comon Games

We were glad to qualify for the 1% turnover tax benefit, which was a key factor in choosing Armenia in the first place. We're also looking at other programs - like tax refunds for hiring migrant specialists and grants for R&D - that could help us in the next stage of our growth."



WHAT TO EXPECT AT E-LOGI FEST 25

# LOGISTICS, E-COMMERCE, AND SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATION

Where  
**Innovation**  
Meets  
**Motion**



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT E-LOGI FEST 25

### LOGISTICS, E-COMMERCE, AND SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATION

From May 30th to June 1st, logistics experts, industry leaders, innovators, and policymakers from around the world will gather in Armenia for [E-Logi Fest 25](#). This event marks [Armenia's first logistics and e-commerce expo and summit](#), and it is planned to position the country as a key player in the regional and global industry.


Local Armenian logistics companies will showcase their capabilities alongside regional players from neighboring countries. [The expo will also welcome international giants in the logistics sector](#), providing a platform for global partnerships. In addition to the three-day expo, a summit will be organized in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The summit will feature

high-level discussions on AI-driven logistics, green solutions, cross-border trade, and last-mile delivery innovations.

The first day will explore future trends in logistics, focusing on the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence, the importance of green and sustainable solutions, and key strategic developments shaping the industry. Day two will broaden the scope to examine [global trade dynamics and the emergence of new logistical routes](#), while simultaneously addressing the aspects of customer satisfaction and the challenges and innovations in last-mile delivery. Finally, the third day will offer a deeper dive into enhancing customer satisfaction through data and analytics,

with a continued focus on optimizing the complexities of last-mile delivery to meet evolving consumer expectations.

This summit isn't just talk—it's about making things happen. As highlighted in *Life in Armenia's* January, February, and March issues, Armenia is currently positioned at the end of the e-commerce supply chain, but [has a unique opportunity to enter the logistics world](#), bypassing the hurdles that slow down other countries. Having all these industry professionals in Yerevan for three days could provide the insights needed to [help the country move up the value chain](#). Here's a deeper look at what to expect during the summit.





# Day 1: The Future of Logistics and E-Commerce

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## Developing Cross-Border Logistics Through Digital Infrastructure

[Craig Strickland](#), Chief Strategy Officer of [BoxC](#) (USA), will open the summit with a keynote on simplifying global e-commerce for SMEs. His talk will focus on [how integrated digital platforms can streamline cross-border fulfillment](#), reducing delays and costs for businesses.

Armenian SMEs depend heavily on multimodal transport networks—primarily road and air freight routed through neighboring Georgia and Iran—to access international markets. However, reliance on third-country transit corridors [exposes them to higher shipping costs, border delays, and inconsistent last-mile connectivity](#), particularly for time-sensitive shipments.

Integrated digital platforms can help optimize routes and streamline customs procedures, improving cross-border fulfillment. This approach can [open up new markets and revenue streams for Armenian exporters](#), from accessing EU markets through optimized Black Sea shipping routes to fulfilling Middle East demand via streamlined Gulf transshipment.



**SPEAKER**

**CRAIG STRICKLAND**  
COMPANY: **BOXC LOGISTICS**  
POSITION: **CSO**  
COUNTRY: **USA**



**SPEAKER**

**JURGIS ADOMAVIČIUS**

COMPANY: TRANSPORT INNOVATION ASSOCIATION, BUNASTA  
POSITION: FOUNDER AND CEO  
COUNTRY: LITHUANIA

## Digitalizing Logistics and Transportation for Cross-Border Trade

[Jurgis Adomavičius](#) from Lithuania's [Transport Innovation Association](#) will explore how digitalization reshapes logistics, particularly in cross-border processes.

Armenia's Crossroads of Peace initiative aims to enhance regional connectivity through a strategic effort to establish East-West transport corridors. The discussion might provide the insights Armenian logistics stakeholders need to [understand how digital tools can cut through bureaucratic red tape](#).

From compliance automation for multi-jurisdictional shipments (EU, EAEU, Middle East) to real-time visibility across the Gulf-Black Sea transit axis and data-driven corridor performance benchmarking, it would help [turn Armenia's geographic position into a competitive logistics advantage](#).



## Adapting to New Demands of Postal Services in E-Commerce

As global e-commerce grows, postal operators must innovate—or risk being left behind. A panel featuring Levan Chikvaidze (CEO, [Georgian Post](#)), [Tadas Drunga](#) (Head of Business Development, [Omniva](#), Estonia), and experts from the [Universal Postal Union \(UPU\)](#) will discuss [how traditional postal services are evolving to meet e-commerce demands](#). Key topics include modernizing last-mile delivery, regulatory challenges, and expanding regional logistics networks.

These insights could accelerate the [conversion of Soviet-era postal facilities into modern hybrid fulfillment centers](#), combining micro-fulfillment for Yerevan-based e-merchants and cross-border consolidation services for regional exporters. Besides, it could unlock new revenue streams by monetizing postal data through logistics-as-a-service (LaaS) platforms.



SPEAKER

**TADAS DRUNGA**  
COMPANY: OMNIVA  
POSITION: HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
COUNTRY: ESTONIA



SPEAKER

**LEVAN CHIKVAIDZE**  
COMPANY: GEORGIAN POST  
POSITION: CEO  
COUNTRY: GEORGIA

## Data, Automation, and Growth Strategies in E-Commerce

[Marina Kazadaeva](#) (Chief of Logistics, [JOOM](#), Hong Kong), [Hayk Karapetyan](#) (CEO, [Ozon](#) Armenia), and Craig Strickland (BoxC, USA) will dive into how technology is reshaping e-commerce logistics. Expect insights on AI-powered warehousing and inventory management, real-time data analytics for demand forecasting, and automation in fulfillment centers.

As Armenia positions itself as **a tech-savvy logistics corridor between Europe and Asia**, these advancements could strengthen its role in global supply chains. Local Armenian startups and logistics providers could also integrate these tools to compete more effectively in regional markets like the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).



SPEAKER

**DAVID IVANYAN**  
COMPANY: YANDEX GO DELIVERY  
POSITION: GENERAL MANAGER  
COUNTRY: ARMENIA

## Faster, Smarter Last Mile Deliveries

[Davit Ivanyan](#) (CEO, [Yandex Go Armenia](#)) will talk on the future of last-mile delivery. As customer expectations rise, companies must adopt autonomous delivery drones and robots, dynamic routing algorithms, and sustainable urban logistics solutions. With Yandex Go leading Armenia's delivery market, this discussion will be necessary for startups and logistics firms alike.

## New Trade Routes and Regional Market Expansion

If Armenia plays its cards right, it could **become a key transit hub between Europe and Asia.**

Speakers from [Enterprise Armenia](#) will explore emerging global trade corridors and how Armenia can leverage its geographic position. The discussion will cover the Middle Corridor (China-Europe trade alternative), Armenia's role in regional supply chains, and strategies for attracting logistics investments.

Armenian service providers must adopt these technologies to remain competitive. Sustainable urban logistics solutions, such as electric delivery fleets and optimized route planning, could also **reduce traffic congestion and emissions in cities like Yerevan**. Ultimately, Armenia can not only enhance its domestic delivery ecosystem but also position itself as a regional leader in smart, tech-driven logistics.





SPEAKER

**GIORGI KACHARAVA**  
COMPANY: ATISU  
POSITION: DIRECTOR OF ATISU  
REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN ARMENIA  
COUNTRY: ARMENIA



**DEREK OSBORN**  
COMPANY: WHATNEXT4U  
POSITION: FOUNDER  
COUNTRY: UK



SPEAKER

**LARISA KISLYAKOVA**  
COMPANY: CENTRAL ASIA TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP,  
THE BOARD OF THE TAJIKISTAN UNION OF PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS  
POSITION: CHAIRPERSON OF THE CENTRAL  
ASIA TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP (TLP)  
COUNTRY: REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

## Day 2: Global Trade and New Routes

### Armenia's Role in Redrawing the Trade Map

By acting decisively, Armenia can transform from a peripheral player into a critical node in Eurasian trade networks. [Giorgi Kacharava](#) (Executive Director, [EU-Georgia Business Council](#)) and [Derek Osborn](#) will open Day 2 with an in-depth discussion on transformative trade routes redefining Eurasian commerce. Later, [Larisa Kislyakova](#) (Chairperson, Central Asia Transport & Logistics Partnership) will join Osborn to examine Armenia's potential integration into these networks.

These conversations will discuss strategic corridors like the Middle Corridor, an alternative China-Europe route, and the infrastructure investments required for Armenia to become a competitive transit hub. Armenia's ability to capitalize on its geographic position requires prioritizing investments in roads, rail links, and digital trade systems while building regional partnerships to align with evolving supply chain demands.

## Building a Logistics-Friendly Ecosystem

A high-level panel featuring [Serhii Derkach](#) (Deputy Minister for Development of Communities and Territories, Ukraine), [Charles Malas](#) (Shirak Dry Port SEZ Creator, Designer, and Proposer, UK), Jurgis Adomavičius (Lithuania), and Enterprise Armenia representatives will [address the intersection of policy and logistics](#).

They will explore how Armenia can refine cross-border regulations, attract logistics investment, and [apply lessons from successful Special Economic Zones \(SEZs\) worldwide](#). The discussion will also highlight the government's role in fostering industry growth through streamlined customs procedures and trade-friendly legislation.



**SPEAKER**

**SERHII DERKACH**  
COMPANY: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES  
AND TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE  
POSITION: DEPUTY MINISTER  
COUNTRY: UKRAINE

If Armenia implements these lessons, it can transform from a landlocked country into a high-efficiency corridor for Eurasian commerce, utilizing its EAEU and EU trade ties to create jobs and diversify the economy. [The window for action is narrow, but the payoff is within reach.](#)





**SPEAKER**

**CHARLE MALAS**  
COMPANY: MODLYFT  
POSITION: CEO  
COUNTRY: UNITED KINGDOM

## How Could Shirak Dry Port SEZ Change Armenia's Trade

In the January 2025 issue of Life in Armenia, I interviewed Charle Malas about the Shirak Dry Port SEZ project concept in Armenia. This project conceptually **has the potential to be the first of its kind in the world**, combining two very interesting components: a dry port and a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) intertwined in one location.

On the 2nd day of the summit, Charle Malas and Derek Osborn will present an in-depth analysis of the Shirak Dry Port SEZ. They will explain how inland ports can enhance trade accessibility without coastal proximity, the potential economic impact on Armenia's GDP, and the port's role in connecting to major corridors like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

## E-Queue for Border Crossings

Serhii Derkach (Ukraine) will introduce E-Queue, a digital system to optimize border crossings for freight transport. Given Armenia's reliance on land-based trade with neighbors like Georgia and Iran, adopting such technology could **reduce truck wait**

**times, minimize bureaucratic inefficiencies, and enhance cargo movement speed.** This innovation represents a necessary step toward making Armenia a more competitive link in regional supply chains.

## Breaking Down Cross-Border Trade Barriers

[Agnieszka Kisielewska](#) (Head of Customs, [MDDP](#), Poland), Armenia's Deputy Chairman of the State Revenue Committee, and Yerevan Municipality representatives will examine strategies for modernizing cross-border trade. Their discussion will cover smart customs solutions to expedite cargo clearance, urban traffic management challenges for logistics operators, and sustainable practices such as green logistics.

Faster customs would directly benefit local exporters, by cutting costs and improving competitiveness in EU and EAEU markets. Solving Yerevan's urban logistics challenges through smart traffic management would [ease congestion while lowering delivery costs for businesses and consumers](#) alike. Armenia could reduce cargo delays, making it an attractive transit route—potentially diverting a portion of Europe-Asia trade flows through its territory. The blueprint exists in Poland's customs modernization success; Armenia's challenge lies in [executing these changes before regional rivals adapt first](#).



**SPEAKER**

**AGNIESZKA KISIELEWSKA**

COMPANY: CUSTOMS AND EXCISE TEAM AND GLOBAL  
LEGAL CUSTOMS ASSOCIATION AND AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

POSITION: PARTNER HEAD AND TAX ADVISOR MEMBER

COUNTRY: POLAND



# Day 3: Data and Analytics for Customer Satisfaction

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## How Data Drives E-Commerce Success

The summit's final day will shift focus to the pivotal role of customer experience in e-commerce. Experts will analyze how AI-powered demand forecasting can prevent stock shortages, the importance of real-time delivery tracking in building consumer trust, and methods for optimizing return processes to retain buyers; these insights will be [invaluable for Armenian businesses looking to compete in the digital marketplace](#).

A series of discussions will explore innovations in last-mile logistics, including the feasibility of autonomous delivery drones and robots in Armenia, crowdsourced delivery models similar to ride-hailing platforms, and sustainable urban logistics solutions like electric vehicles and micro-fulfillment centers.

## What Armenia Can Learn from Global Leaders

The summit will conclude with [real-world examples from logistics pioneers](#) like Estonia's Omniva and Georgia's postal reforms, offering actionable insights for Armenia's growing e-commerce sector. By adopting best practices in efficiency, technology, and customer service, Armenian businesses and policymakers can [lay the foundation for a strong, future-ready logistics ecosystem](#).

## Why These Discussions Matter for Armenia

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**Armenia's success now depends on execution!** However, first, it must learn the right lessons from industry leaders and adapt their successes to Armenia's context. E-Logi Fest25

is the platform to make that happen—preparing Armenia's logistics stakeholders, both public and private, for the next step: actionable strategies.

**Book Your Tickets to e-Logi Fest 25**

[➔ book now](#)



# “Magazine Feedback”

Germany



**Hasmik A.**

I love seeing Armenians by choice feeling happy here. I myself am somewhere in between, trying to reintegrate more and more in Armenia and getting these positive signals are so important.

Switzerland



**Alexander S.**

Great magazine, you are topping yourself with every issue.



**Anna M.**

Thank you so much for the story! Now definitely need to put this one on my list of places to visit when I visit Armenia again! Greatly appreciate you taking the time to write down the details.



**Mark J.**

You are awesome and full of incredible ideas with the substance and gumption to make them a reality!



BECOMING A GLOBAL TECH NOMAD

# LAUNCHING AN AI-DRIVEN BUSINESS WITH MINIMAL OVERHEAD



**TIMOTHÉE  
BACHER**

FOUNDER, TECH NOMADS | AI MICRO  
STARTUP CONSULTANT



## BECOMING A GLOBAL TECH NOMAD LAUNCHING AN AI-DRIVEN BUSINESS WITH MINIMAL OVERHEAD

I'm originally from Strasbourg, France, but for over 15 years, I've been living abroad, and now, I find myself in Yerevan, Armenia. The idea of traveling and exploring the world has been a part of me since I was a kid. I'd stare at maps for hours, imagining what life was like on the other side, dreaming of new places

and people. I've **always believed the world was full of stories**, beauty, and adventures. And to me, travelling or freedom wasn't just about moving around, it was about learning new things, meeting new people, and growing wherever life took me. That sense of freedom has been my driving force ever since.



By chance, I ended up in tech, becoming a product manager and working with teams from around the world, from Japan to Europe. Spending so much of my life outside of France **made me feel like a citizen of the world**, blending experiences and perspectives that shaped who I am today. Back home, my friends always saw me as someone who embraced risk early on, someone who wasn't afraid to step outside my comfort zone and explore new possibilities.

Through all this, I've learned something important: true freedom isn't about where you are, but how you choose to live. It's about being able to work, live, and create on your own terms, deciding where you want to be, when you want to work, and who you want to work with. It's about living in a way that feels right to you, and the best part? **It's easier than ever to create that kind of life.**



# Freedom isn't just a Word, it's a Way of Life

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Freedom is often seen as something you can just name and claim, but it's so much more than that. It's not just about where you are or when you're working. It's about creating a lifestyle that allows you to choose your own hours, your clients, your tools, and your location. It's about working when it makes sense, resting when needed, and constantly evolving as you go.

This is exactly what Tech Nomads is all about. It's a community of people just like you, designers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and anyone who wants to live and work on their own terms. We provide the tools, the support, and the confidence to help you start your own journey, whether you're building a micro SaaS, diving into digital services, or just beginning to explore what's possible.

That's why I started [Tech Nomads](#), not just as a business but as a movement, a mission, and a calling. It's for people who want to design their own lives and build their own businesses, wherever they are.

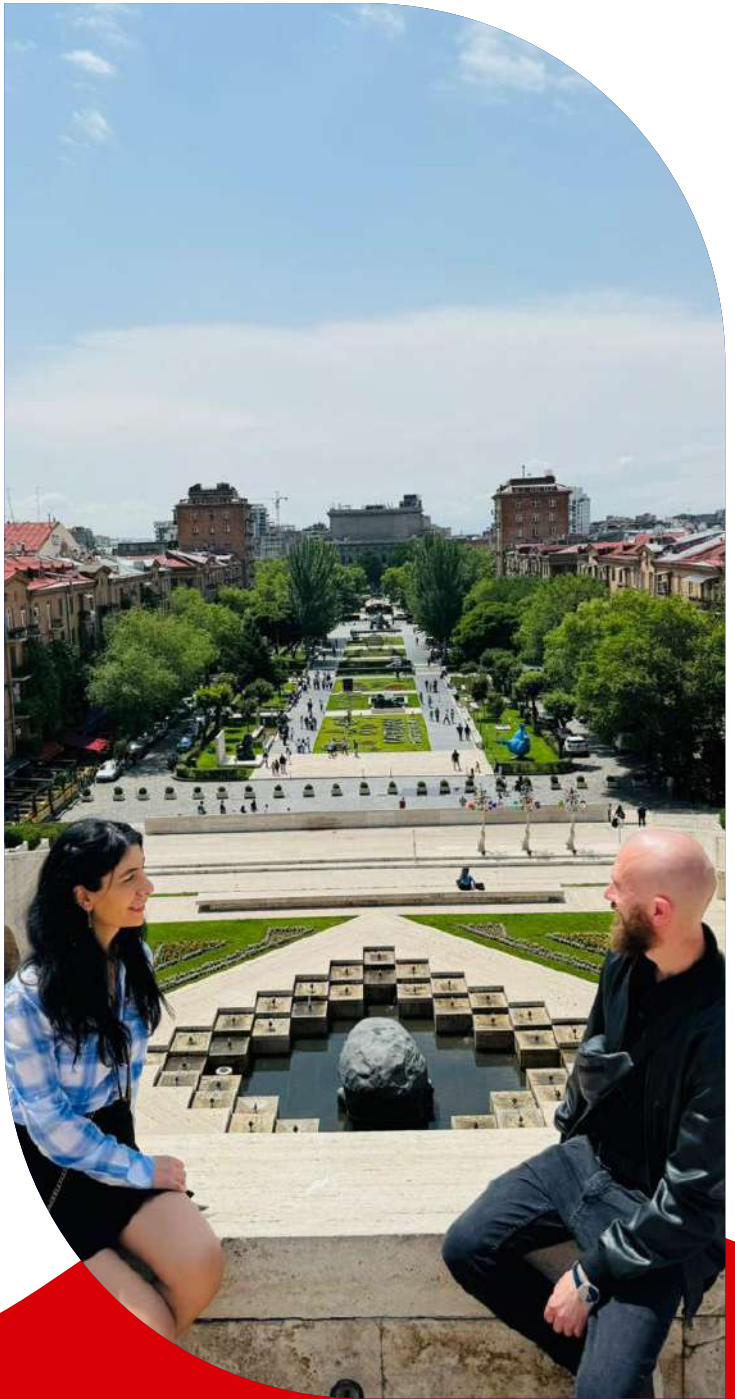


# My Armenian Chapter

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Armenia has become a turning point in my life, **a place full of inspiration where love has taken root**. The landscapes, the culture, and the flow of daily life all feel deeper now. Being here isn't just about geography; it's about connection, creation, and the quiet joy of building a life beside someone whose heart belongs to this land.

Most days in Yerevan start pretty simply. I grab my laptop and head out to one of the cafés where I feel most at home. Ground Zero feels almost like a coworking space, you see the same familiar faces, fellow remote workers and builders hanging out every day, and there's this steady, focused energy that makes it easy to get into work mode. Green Bean is perfect if you want a quieter start to the day, especially after an early morning walk up the Cascade. **The view from the top resets your head**, and the calm vibe inside helps you carry that clarity into your work. Mart, on the other hand, has great coffee and a warm, welcoming atmosphere that makes it easy to settle in and stay for hours.



I usually pick a table near the window, order a coffee or a tea, and dive into work. I spend a few hours there building small, focused micro apps, tools that are sometimes just one simple idea, but they come to life fast

when you combine intuition with the latest AI models. I might start with a vague concept or a note I scribbled on my phone the night before, and within a few hours, I'm watching it take shape, live, functioning, and ready to ship.



It still blows my mind how quickly things can move these days. With the right tools, I can go from idea to execution without writing hundreds of lines of code from scratch. AI helps with everything, from naming things to generating code, mocking up designs, or shipping a fully functioning app. What used to take weeks of trial and error can now be prototyped and deployed in a single afternoon. **There's something addictive and exciting about that momentum**, like you're riding this creative wave, and the only limit is how fast you can think. It makes building feel more like play than work.

I've spent time in cities like Barcelona, Copenhagen, and Budapest — each with its own vibe and rhythm, and I've loved the freedom of constantly discovering new places. But **what strikes me about Yerevan is how welcoming and open it feels**. I really love the rhythm of life here. It's easy to find a spot to work, people are genuinely friendly, and there's this natural openness when you start a conversation. I've met developers, creatives, and even curious locals who just want to talk about AI and how it's changing everything. **There's no pressure or pretentiousness**, just good energy.

It's not like some of the other cities I've passed through recently. I was in Rome not long ago, and as amazing as the architecture and food were, it wasn't the easiest place to work remotely. Too many tourists, too much movement, not enough spaces where you can just sit down and focus. Coming from Eastern Europe, I've seen how places like Sofia have become transient hubs for nomads, with fast internet, decent cafés, and a flow of people coming and going. **But Armenia feels different.**





It feels like a place where you can actually stay, build something meaningful, and connect on a deeper level. The Caucasus has this raw beauty and sense of possibility. For me, Armenia is more than just a stop; it's **where I've found the right balance between building and living**, between creating and connecting. And that's exactly what I think many digital nomads are looking for, whether they know it yet or not.

But when I talk to people, both here and abroad, I often hear the same question: "I want to build something, a product or a service, but I have no idea where to start." This question reflects the uncertainty so many face when they want to create but **don't know how to take that first step**.

The truth is, it's never been easier to create a life where you're in control. What used to take months of planning and big investments can now be done in a fraction of the time. With tools like no-code platforms, APIs, and AI, you can create products and services from scratch in no time, even if you're not a tech expert. **All it takes is curiosity and the willingness** to get your hands dirty and experiment.



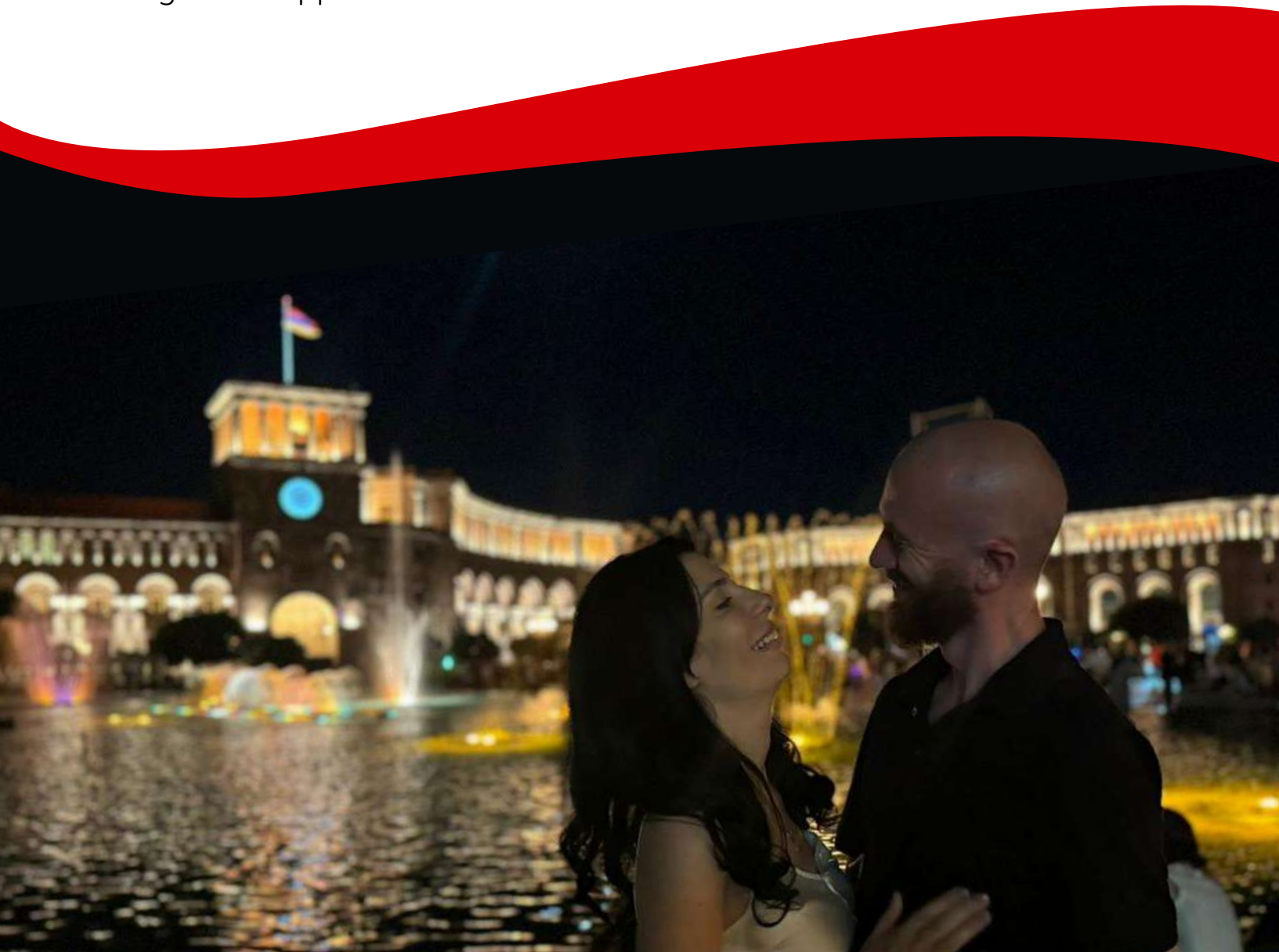


# Creating is Where the Magic Happens

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It's not just about building something, it's about mastering the process of creation. Whether you're designing, building, or marketing a product, it's all part of the journey. **The more you create, the more you learn**, and the more you expose yourself to new ideas and opportunities. It's a process of trial, error, and constant improvement. That's where the real growth happens.

I meet a lot of people who think they need to be experts before they can start. But the truth is, the best way to learn is by doing. I started Tech Nomads to show you that you don't need to be a pro to begin building your own business. Whether you have an idea scribbled on a napkin or are just getting started, the important thing is to take that first step and keep moving forward.





# Design Your Life As A Tech Nomad

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Tech Nomads isn't just for digital nomads or remote workers; it's for anyone who's ready to take control of their life and their work. It's a space where anyone can come to learn, build, and grow, regardless of their background or experience level. The tools are there, the possibilities are endless, and **all you need is the belief that you can do it.**

I help people build micro SaaS products, APIs, and digital services daily. And what I've learned is that the more you create, the more you expose yourself to creativity, opportunity, and learning. And when you fail? You're one step closer to success.

If you've ever wondered if it's truly possible to live life on your own terms, the answer is simple: **it all begins with that first step.** It might seem small, but that single action is what sets everything in motion. Whether you're just starting or already on your way, the journey to freedom starts right now. Don't wait for the perfect moment, let's make it happen. True freedom is born from the courage to begin.





FROM THE SULTANATE OF OMAN TO ARMENIA

# A COACHING EXPERT'S IMPRESSIONS OF HIS FIRST VISIT TO YEREVAN



**DR. MOHAMED  
SAMIR**

MANAGING DIRECTOR AND PARTNER  
AT GLOBAL LEARNING PARTNER TM



## FROM THE SULTANATE OF OMAN TO ARMENIA A COACHING EXPERT'S IMPRESSIONS OF HIS FIRST VISIT TO YEREVAN

I adore the coincidence that created this opportunity for one of my greatest and [most memorable trips so far](#), to Yerevan.

This coincidence happened when I was at an HR conference in Oman in February 2024, and I met this Armenian super lady, [Arpi Karapetyan](#), who was a speaker at that conference. We chatted about the coaching domain, since we are both professionally certified coaches in the AI world, and this was my first time learning about Armenia.

While talking to Arpi, she invited me to speak at an international HR conference, the [12th Annual Regional HR Conference](#), in Armenia, about coaching in the AI era. I was excited, but I didn't know that this excitement would turn into a lifetime experience and, I can literally say, [an addiction to Armenia and the Armenian people](#).

### Arriving in Armenia

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Once I left the airplane, I felt the authenticity of the place I was going to discover! The airport suggested a culture beyond imagination that I had to explore.

I felt like I was in a relaxing place; I don't know why! But wait a minute, and let's go back in time a few days. I was also invited to speak at the large WCIT conference, which I saw advertised even at the airport! So I told myself this country has a business mindset and knows how to market itself.

Also, I was [shocked to see many connection requests via LinkedIn](#) just because they saw my picture and video on the two conferences' advertisements. And believe me, they weren't only requests; they were talking and chatting to get to know me better and introduce themselves, as if we were friends.





The way from the airport to the hotel made me feel like I had traveled back in time, but at the same time, I saw a huge amount of technology around me, like electric and modern cars alongside very old, authentic cars (like my homeland, Egypt). So immediately I felt connected in one way or another.

The first conference was in Sardarabad, and I truly felt the deep history and some common artistic elements between the ancient civilizations, **Armenian and ancient Egyptian**, from food names to jewelry.



## The Armenian People

Once I reached the country, Mr. [Samvel Movsisyan](#), the founder of [Leadership School Armenia](#), invited me for a cup of coffee, even though we didn't know each other. I found myself giving a session about coaching in the leadership domain to his marvelous attendees. Then they invited me for Armenian coffee the next day to learn more about coaching. Seriously! **Are you all that much into learning in Armenia?**

So, after speaking at two international conferences, giving a session, and facilitating a two-day training program about coaching, I can say that **Armenian people are some of the best humans I've ever met.**

I have traveled to many countries in Europe, the USA, Arab countries, and Asia, but this time, I discovered that Armenian people are truly different and authentic, with unique personalities.







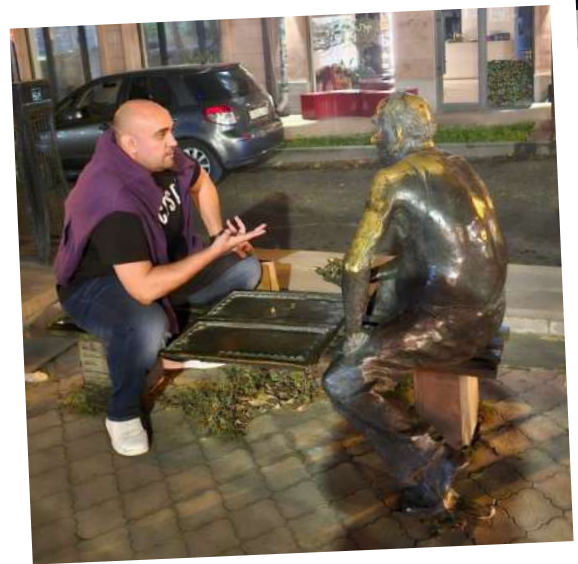
## Some Fun Away from Business

I walked a lot every day to see the streets and the **families with their children playing in each park**—and this is not an option in the hot weather of Gulf countries!

The most shocking moment was when I received a LinkedIn connection request, followed by a message from someone I didn't know, called "Raffy Kalaydjian" He started talking to me in my mother tongue, Egyptian! I then discovered that he is Armenian/ Egyptian, also from my city, Alexandria, and was working in the same domain! And, **as usual in this country, we went for coffee** and talked like very old friends.

In summary, I am addicted to this country and am seriously considering opening a branch of my business there because **I feel it is a great place to live and work.**

Thank you, Mathew Zein, for letting me try to express what is in my heart for Armenia.





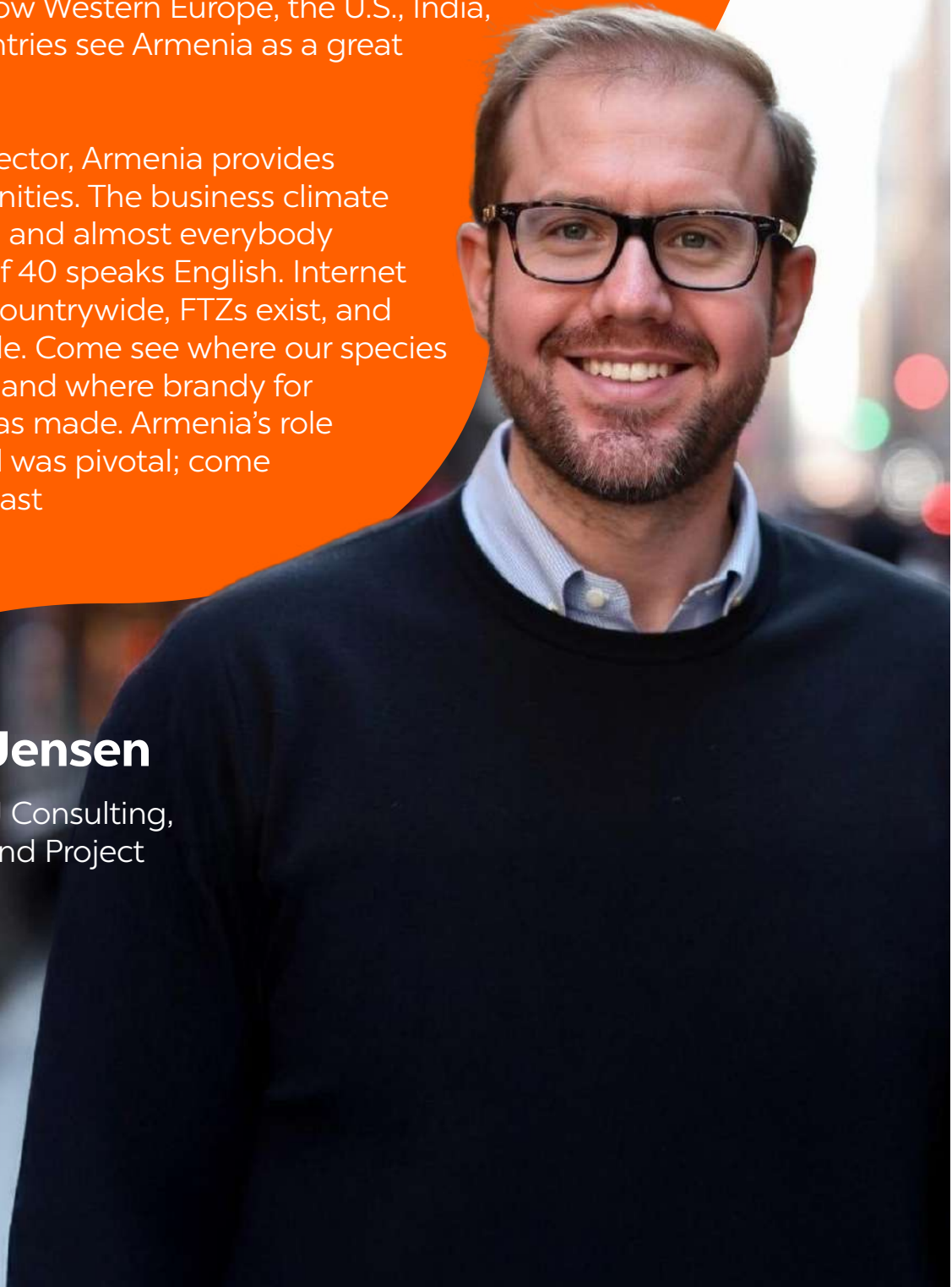
“ Hayastan or Armenia holds a deep place in my heart. Learning the alphabet, writing the language adored by Lord Byron, and speaking my atrophied Armenian warms my heart. From Shirak to Syunik, Ijevan to Etchmiadzin, Armenia’s history, food, culture, and people are more profound than its deepest gorges and unparalleled landscape.

Armenia’s economy is diversifying, and international capital is being attracted to new opportunities in Yerevan and Armenia’s 10 provinces. Traditional external sources of money keep investing, but now Western Europe, the U.S., India, and MENA countries see Armenia as a great opportunity.

No matter the sector, Armenia provides unique opportunities. The business climate is fairly Western, and almost everybody under the age of 40 speaks English. Internet connectivity is countrywide, FTZs exist, and banking is simple. Come see where our species first made wine and where brandy for ancient kings was made. Armenia’s role on the Silk Road was pivotal; come explore where East meets West.

 **Mark Jensen**

Founder of MGJ Consulting,  
Commodities, and Project  
Development



THE BUBBLES THEY TRIED TO BANISH

# A SPARKLING JOURNEY FROM CHAMPAGNE TO ARMENIA



**DIANA  
KHANDILYAN**

FOUNDER OF GLASS NOMAD



## THE BUBBLES THEY TRIED TO BANISH A SPARKLING JOURNEY FROM CHAMPAGNE TO ARMENIA

Imagine a world without Champagne for celebration, without the tradition of pulling the cork, without the joy of bubbles rising in a glass to mark life's greatest moments. It seems unthinkable now, but for centuries, winemakers in Champagne saw these very bubbles as their greatest enemy.

For generations, they struggled against this unruly phenomenon. Dom Pérignon, one of Champagne's most famous figures, spent his life trying to perfect the region's wine. Contrary to legend, he did not invent Champagne but fought tirelessly to rid his wines of bubbles, considering them a flaw. At the time,

winemakers saw bubbles as an embarrassment, even a danger—entire cellars sometimes fell victim to chain-reaction explosions. Cellarmasters inspecting their stock often wore iron masks to protect themselves from flying glass; transporting Champagne was just as challenging. Before strong bottles existed, the wine had to be moved in barrels and consumed quickly before it spoiled.

A breakthrough came in 1615 when King James I of England, concerned about deforestation, prohibited using wood for glass production. This forced glassmakers to switch to coal-fired furnaces, which burned hotter and more efficiently, leading to

stronger glass. What was once a fragile and unreliable container became a robust vessel capable of containing Champagne's effervescence.

With this innovation, Champagne could finally be bottled safely, but another challenge remained: making it clearer, more refined, and truly worthy of luxury. That task fell not to a monk but to a widow—Madame Clicquot, or as the world knows her, Veuve Clicquot. Left to run her late husband's wine business when women were rarely seen in such roles, she revolutionized Champagne-making by pioneering the riddling process, which removed unsightly sediment and ensured a clearer, more refined sparkling wine.

Interestingly, while Champagne is known for its delicate golden hue, most is made primarily from black grapes. The three main varieties of Champagne production are Chardonnay (a white grape), Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier (both black grapes). Champagne remains white despite using black grapes because of the winemaking process—pressing the grapes gently ensures that little to no pigment from the skins makes it into the juice. This technique allows winemakers to craft everything from crisp Blanc de Blancs (100% Chardonnay) to richer Blanc de Noirs (made exclusively from black grapes), showcasing the complexity and elegance of the region's terroir.

Veuve Clicquot's determination and brilliance didn't just refine the product; they redefined what Champagne could be. As demand for her sparkling wines grew across Europe, one market in particular became obsessed—Russia. Enchanted by the golden effervescence and luxurious taste, the aristocracy couldn't get enough of Veuve Clicquot's Champagne. Their preference leaned toward rich, sweet styles—so sweet, in fact, that a bottle often contained nearly double the sugar of today's sweet wines.



One of the most notable figures in this love affair with Champagne was Tsar Alexander II, who went a step further by commissioning a special Champagne exclusively for the Russian royal court. He requested that Louis Roederer produce a unique, crystal-clear bottle with no punt at the bottom to prevent the possibility of hiding explosives—a mark of both luxury and security in a politically tense era. This exclusive creation became known as Cristal, a Champagne that remains synonymous with prestige today.



Meanwhile, across the Channel, the English developed a taste for drier styles, a preference that would eventually shape the modern Brut Champagne we know today. This contrast in tastes led to the various styles of Champagne production, with winemakers tailoring their bubbly to different markets, from Brut Nature to Doux. Curiously, while Russian aristocracy favored the sweetest style, preferences lean toward semi-sweet and semi-dry styles in Armenia.

But no story of Champagne is complete without mentioning 'Champagne Charlie,' a man whose charisma and daring helped shape its international reputation. Charles Heidsieck truly embodied the Champagne lifestyle when he fearlessly ventured into the American market when other Champagne makers hesitated, unsure of the people's tastes.

He wined and dined with high society with effortless charm, seducing them with the sparkle of fine Champagne. Before long, his name was whispered in elite salons and toasted in lavish soirées—Champagne and Charlie became inseparable. Meanwhile, his competitors steered clear, fearing that the American palate was too unpredictable. Heidsieck's boldness paid off, and his legacy endures, proving that sometimes, understanding and shaping tastes is just as important as following them.



# A New Chapter in an Ancient Winemaking Tradition

As Champagne conquered the world, its influence stretched beyond France, inspiring winemakers from unexpected regions to craft their own sparkling wines. With its ancient winemaking heritage, Armenia now embraces all three traditional Champagne-making techniques: Méthode Traditionnelle, Charmat Method, and Asti Method, each offering a unique expression of Armenian terroir and grapes.



Méthode Traditionnelle, the same process used in Champagne, creates complex, fine-bubbled wines with aging potential. Wineries like [Keush](#) use native Armenian grapes like Voskehat and Khatoun Kharji, bringing crisp acidity and floral notes.

Charmat Method, commonly associated with Prosecco, produces fresher, fruitier sparkling wines. [Karas Winery](#) applies this technique using international and Armenian grape varieties for an easy-drinking style with a sense of place.







Asti Method, originating in Italy's Piedmont region, involves a single fermentation in pressurized tanks, preserving natural sweetness and aromatic intensity.

Armenian wineries like [Van Ardi](#) and [Tushpa](#) experiment with this method, using indigenous grapes such as Muscat and Kangun to create fresh, fruit-forward sparkling wines.



In terms of flavor, [Armenian sparkling wines](#) carry a signature identity—high-altitude vineyards lend bright acidity, while indigenous grapes contribute floral, citrus, and stone fruit aromas. Expect crisp notes of green apple, pear, and white flowers in Méthode Traditionnelle wines, while Charmat-style sparkling wines highlight tropical fruit, peach, and refreshing minerality. Asti-style sparkling wines bring aromas of honey, orange blossom, and ripe apricot, making them an indulgent yet refreshing choice.

But you may wonder—since Armenia doesn't have an abundance of fresh seafood, shellfish, or oysters, [what are the best pairings for Armenian sparkling wines](#)? Not to worry! Armenian sparkling wines offer versatile options; instead of seafood, these wines shine alongside grilled vegetables, fresh herbs, lavash-wrapped cheeses, dried fruits, and nuts.





Méthode Traditionnelle wines, with their crisp acidity, pair beautifully with dolma (stuffed grape leaves) and mshosh (a lentil and dried fruit dish). Charmat-style sparkling wines complement ghapama (roasted pumpkin with rice and dried fruit), while Asti-style sparkling wines are a perfect match for gata (Armenian sweet bread) and fruit-based desserts.

These pairings showcase the richness of Armenian cuisine, where earthy, spiced, and sweet flavors harmonize beautifully with the lively effervescence of sparkling wines.

Armenia's sparkling wine scene is a testament to innovation and heritage. Still not convinced? Grab a glass of sparkling wine and a bowl of freshly popped, salty popcorn—the crunch, the salt, and the bubbles are a match made in snacking heaven.

As the story of sparkling wine continues to evolve, one thing is certain—whether in Champagne or Armenia, the joy of popping a bottle and watching the bubbles rise remains a universal pleasure.





We'd love to hear from you! **Have you sipped on Armenian sparkling wine?** Have you discovered the perfect pairing? Share your thoughts, experiences, and recommendations, and let's celebrate the joy of bubbles together!

And with that, I raise a glass of Keush Origins Brut to **the past, the present, and the sparkling future of Armenian wine.**



Here are some books for further reading on the fascinating history of Champagne and its key figures:

**“The Widow Clicquot: The Story of a Champagne Empire and the Woman Who Ruled It”** by Tilar J. Mazzeo.

**“Champagne Charlie: The Frenchman Who Taught Americans to Love Champagne”** by Don & Petie Kladstrup

**“Bursting Bubbles: A Secret History of Champagne and the Rise of the Great Growers”** by Robert Walters.



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ESCAPE TO THE ARMENIAN ALPS

# ARMENIA'S MOUNTAIN CABIN CALLING DIGITAL NOMADS



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**SATENIK  
KHACHATRYAN**

Founder of Nature Rooms Cabin



## ESCAPE TO THE ARMENIAN ALPS ARMENIA'S MOUNTAIN CABIN CALLING DIGITAL NOMADS

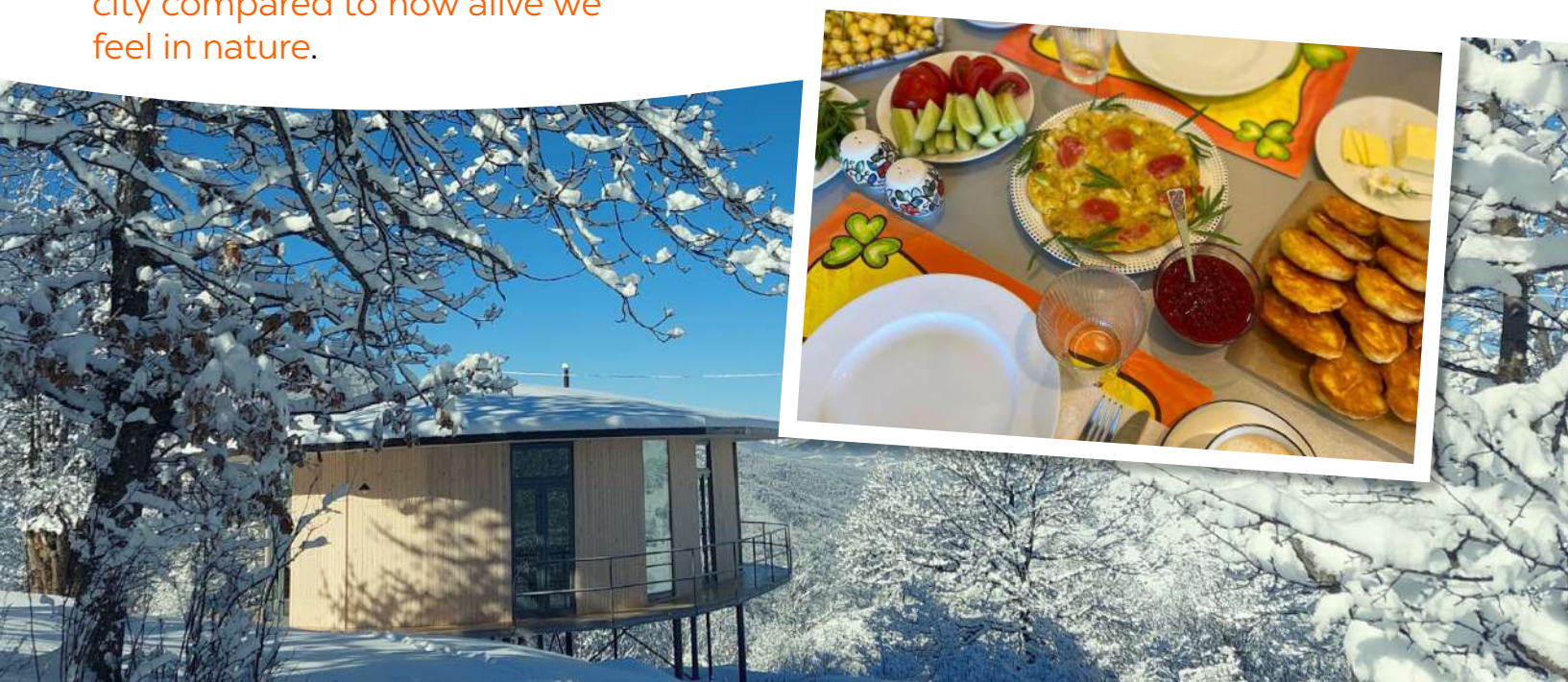


It's a real shame how the stunning Armenian mountains don't receive the love they deserve around the world. You hear all about the Alps or the Pyrenees, while the **untouched beauty of Armenia's highlands remains a well-kept secret**. Having spent years exploring this incredible country, I've been so fortunate to witness the unique charm of its forests and mountains firsthand.

For me, Armenian nature has always been a true escape, a sanctuary away from city life and the noise of crowds. It's where I can simply be with magnificent nature, whether I need to get my head straight, look deep within my soul, or even concentrate on a project away from what we call "life" in the city. It's not until we're hit by the truth that we realize how much **we barely live in the city compared to how alive we feel in nature**.

Just recently, I came across the most charming little cabin right in the heart of nature near the village of Martuni in Armenia's Gegharkunik Province. At first, I just assumed it was a private retreat for someone incredibly fortunate, and honestly, I felt a little envy of whoever had built such a haven. But then, I found out it's actually a small guest house called [Nature Rooms Cabin](#). Two cozy bedrooms, a living room, a fully equipped kitchen, a library, an office space, and a deck ...etc., and **a deck with a full 360-degree panorama of pure nature**. Towering oak trees embrace the cabin, creating a sense of being in your private forest – a true escape for anyone staying there.

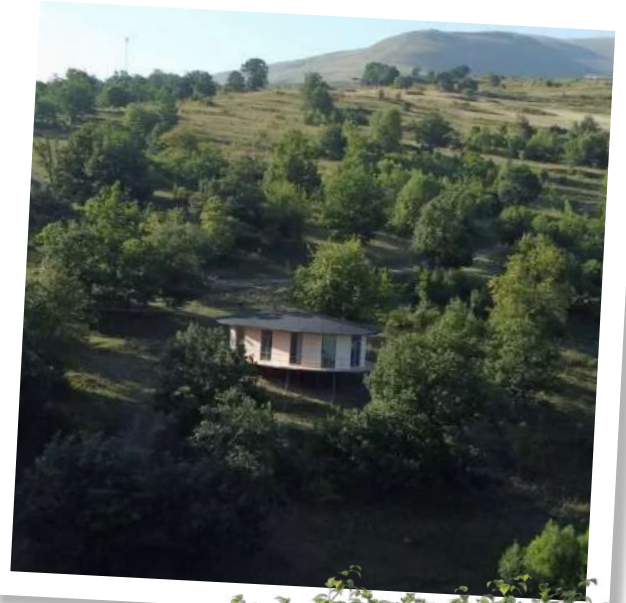
This rentable cabin was lovingly built by [Satenik Khachatryan](#), whom I had the pleasure of meeting in person. She's using it to draw international attention to her small village. What an absolutely wonderful and unique way to put village Martuni of Chambarak on the map and showcase its beauty!





And it gets even better: her family takes care of the guests personally, and everything they serve inside is fresh, sourced directly from Satenik's village. We're talking about the milk, eggs, a variety of cheeses, vegetables, fruits, and even the honey – **all coming from her home village, just 200 meters away**. When I asked about a dinner menu, she explained they don't have one in the traditional sense. Instead, her mother prepares a fresh dinner using the seasonal ingredients available, and they serve it to their guests. **Whatever the family enjoys at home, their guests at Nature Rooms Cabin get to savor too.**

I asked her to share the story of how Nature Rooms Cabin came to be – how this passion project was born from the vision of a kind woman who studied education in Europe. As she shared her thoughts, I didn't want to change a single word. It felt important for everyone to **experience her story exactly as it flowed from her writing**. Below, you'll find her own words.

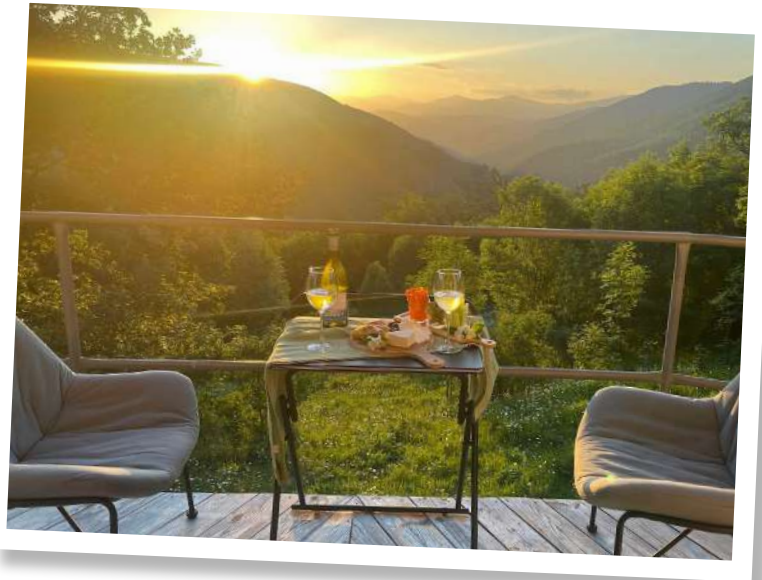




# The Story of Nature Rooms by Satenik Khachatryan

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The story of this place is interwoven with the story of my childhood. I grew up near the forest, and the forest was my playground. I grew up knowing exactly what flowers follow each other with the coming of spring, waiting for violets and tress of wild plum and pear to blossom, exploring the edible herbs, taking the lambs to graze in the field, playing games just having our imagination and nature at hand, with no fear, where everything seemed possible.



This place where the Nature Rooms cabin is standing now is one of my favorite places in the forest. It is very close to the house where I grew up, and it was among my childhood wild forest playgrounds.

Growing up in a small rural village, I always felt missed out, not good enough, as I grew up in a small village and not in a big city. I had that complex of being disadvantaged until I was about 30 years old, when I was researching children and childhood in my Master's program in Europe, and I discovered that I had the best childhood that research has proven.

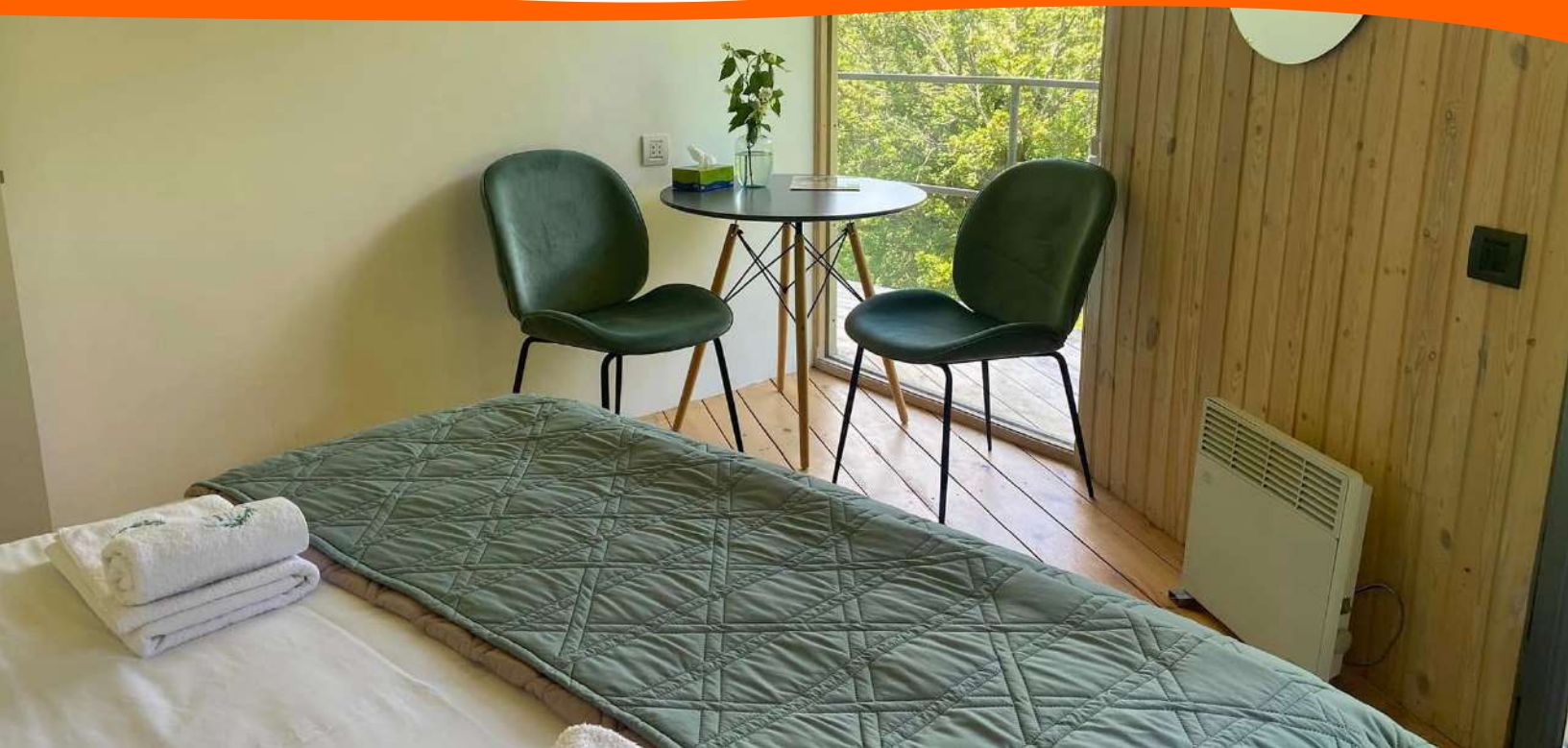


I grew up in a family where there is a strong belief in education and hard work, and I knew that education and knowledge are my only weapons, my only power that will help me create the life I want and reach my dreams. I was still studying in my small village school, where I had the dream to study in Europe or other Western countries. I had a big interest in cultures, languages, and lifestyles. And my belief and commitment took me to 4 Universities in Europe, among them Norway, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden, where I got my Master's degree in education.



I have a strong commitment to bringing much-needed positive changes in the lives of children in Armenia, helping to eradicate poverty, and creating better living conditions for families living in rural areas. I grew up seeing all the hardships that Armenia had to face since its independence. I went to school in 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed and Armenia gained independence.

Seeing all those hardships, I decided, as a child, that I was going to help my country become a better place for everyone. While working for international organizations that had similar goals for Armenia, I was making up my own projects, with a bottom-up perspective, as I was sure that change is real, consistent, and sustainable if it comes from the people who live there, and I was one of them. After my work and studies in Yerevan and Europe, I was **back to my native village to devote myself fully to its development**



Once being a child from the village with limited opportunities for education, I now was back with Master's degree with excellency from 4 Universities and with a huge luggage of knowledge and skills I gained by studying and living abroad.



Together with my younger sister we established a number of community-based projects aiming to contribute to social, cultural, educational, economic and spiritual development of our village. We did that as volunteers investing our time, knowledge and skills together with donations we received from people that wanted to support our projects.

Then the idea of establishing an educational and wellbeing center was born, where we wanted to have under one roof all our projects, and this is when Nature Rooms cabin was born. We didn't know how to build anything from zero; we had only the idea and nothing else but the idea. We met architects and they offered project plans, we wanted the building to be in harmony with nature, **to be a part of the nature, as if grown there like trees or plants**, we wanted it to be unique with its concept and style, we wanted it to be nature friendly, and be built in respect with nature. We wanted our footprint to be as invisible as possible, **not to disturb the peace of the forest.**





The idea evolved in 2020, and it took about 4 years to complete the project. We still have a few little things to finish it fully. The first seed fund we got from Caritas Armenia, and also Impact Hub Yerevan, the bigger part was built thanks to donations from my family and about 20 people from all over the world, who knew me and wanted to support the project. We wanted the Nature Rooms cabin to become a hub for change and development for our village and Chambarak.

Building something like this in the middle of nowhere may seem a crazy idea, but I knew that if one creates something valuable, no matter where you are, people like you will find you and come, people who have similar values, similar beliefs, similar

aspirations. And I now feel blessed as I host amazing people from all over the world. Now is a big achievement for me, especially when my guests arrive at the cabin right from their plane, **among all the places in Armenia, they choose to come to us.**

My goal is to provide that much needed true rest in this hectic world to people who are looking for inspiration, looking for **a silent place to hear the call of their heart and soul**, to be one with nature with no manmade destructions, that is why in the wild nature there is only the cabin standing, and there are no manmade constructions around to give that authentic, true rest in the nature that human soul is seeking so

much. This is also where my guests can be more productive. I get guests who combine work with rest, working remotely, and **they mentioned that here they work more productively.**

The cabin has all modern conveniences flavored with aesthetics and coziness, where minimalism meets comfort with breathtaking views over layers of mountains and forests. **You can take a hike to the waterfall,** to the medieval monastic complex, or take a master class of beekeeping, farming, yarn making and learning the wisdom of locals.



GITEX EUROPE 2025

# REIGNITING AN OPEN, BOLD & COLLABORATIVE EUROPEAN DIGITAL ECONOMY AMIDST 200€BN AI AMBITIONS



**PRESS RELEASE**



**GITEX EUROPE 2025**

**REIGNITING AN OPEN, BOLD & COLLABORATIVE EUROPEAN  
DIGITAL ECONOMY AMIDST €200BN AI AMBITIONS**

With landmark initiatives announced to forge new frontiers in Europe's digital sovereignty, including the €200bn AI pledge and unprecedented emphasis on quantum, cloud, semiconductors, and data storage, a sense of urgency is sweeping across the continent to reimagine the status quo and reshape critical tech infrastructures.

Perfectly timed to harness Europe's inherent innovation prowess and catapult its position among leading digital economies is **GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything** (21-23 May, Messe Berlin). The world's third-largest economy and host nation for **GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything**, Germany's role as the European economic and technology chieftain

comes into sharp focus, as transatlantic tensions ramp up in the race for global digital and AI leadership. Germany's ICT sector is projected to reach €232.8bn in 2025 (Statista).

**GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything**, now emerging as Europe's largest inaugural tech, startup and digital investment event, is organised by KAOUN International and hosted in partnership with the Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Berlin Partner for Business and Technology, and the European Innovation Council (EIC).

Franziska Giffey, Mayor of Berlin and Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises, said: "Partnering with one of the largest tech and startup global events and hosting the debut of **GITEX EUROPE** in Berlin strengthens our commitment to solidifying Germany's position as a global magnet for investment and frontier-pushing technologies, spearheading Europe's edge in the next digital decade."

**GITEX**  
GLOBAL

# Global Tech Openly Engages for Cross-Border, Cross-Industry Partnerships

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The momentous first edition brings together over 1,400 big tech enterprises, startups and SMEs, including platinum sponsors AWS and IBM, alongside Bosch, Cisco, Cloudflare, Dell, Fortinet, H3C, Lenovo, ManageEngine, NTT, Nutanix, Nvidia, Opswat, and SAP, to forge consensus in new partnerships and business outcomes for more agile, and responsible global digital systems. **GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything** presents the most global tech and startup event with a sterling lineup of tech companies from over 100 countries and 34 European states, including tech pavilions from India, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, South Korea, UK, UAE, and more.

Trixie LohMirmand, CEO of KAOUN International, organiser of **GITEX worldwide**, shared: “Amid the AI whirlwinds, there is a coordinated consensus and renewed urgency and unity across Europe to assert its digital sovereignty and leadership as a global innovation force. The region is paving its way as a centre-stage where AI, quantum and deep tech supremacy will be debated, developed, and scaled, and **GITEX EUROPE** strategically hosted in this vantage nexus and watershed time in history shall define Europe’s technological future in an epoch where leadership is earned through bold action and solidarity.”

## Influential Global Leaders Address EU’s Critical Tech Crossroads

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Over 500 global speakers - nearly half addressing the tech community for the first time on a German tech stage – debate the new strategic priorities, from AI and quantum supremacy to cloud and data sovereignty. Among the global headliners are Geoffrey Hinton, Physics Nobel Laureate (2024), ‘Godfather of AI’, and the neural network pioneer who sparked worldwide debate

by questioning AI consequences; Kai Wegner, Mayor of Berlin; H.E. Jelena Begović, Serbian Minister of Science, Technological Development and Innovation; António Henriques, CEO, Bison Bank; Jager McConnell, CEO, Crunchbase; Mark Surman, President, Mozilla; and Sandro Gianella, Head of Europe & Middle East Policy & Partnerships, OpenAI.



# Europe's Boldest Moves in AI, Deep Tech & Quantum

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Europe is building its own AI frontier, focused on industry use-cases, new investments and international partnerships. **Ai Everything Europe**, the event's flagship AI showcase and conference, brings together one of the biggest convergences of AI architects, startups and investors presenting the full scale, depth and global influence of AI ecosystems.

Influential AI experts address the sector's most urgent topics on-stage, from EuroStack ambitions to tangible implications of agentic AI, with speakers including Martin Kon, President and COO, Cohere, the \$5.5bn Canadian AI unicorn; Daniel Verten, Strategy Partner, Synthesia, \$2.1bn UK-based unicorn backed by Nvidia; and Prof. Dr. Antonio Krueger, CEO of German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI).

Across the show-floor, diverse AI breakthroughs come to life, from Brazil's Ubivis presenting smart factories powered by IoT and Digital Twins to Hexis' AI-driven nutrition trusted by 500+ Olympic and elite athletes.

With nearly €7 billion in quantum investment, second only to China, Europe is accelerating its push for quantum leadership by 2030. **GITEX Quantum Expo (GQX)**, in partnership with IBM and QBN (Quantum Business Network) industry association, dives into advanced quantum research and cross-industry impact with exclusive showcases and conferences. Speakers include Mira Wolf-Bauwens, Responsible Quantum Computing Lead, IBM Research, Switzerland; Joachim Mnich, Director of Research & Computing,

CERN, Switzerland; Neil Abroug, Head of the French National Quantum Strategy, INRIA; and Jan Goetz, CEO & Co-Founder, IQM Quantum Computers, Finland.

Alessandro Curioni, IBM Fellow, Vice President Europe and Africa and Director of IBM Research Zurich said: "IBM's investments in AI and quantum computing directly reflect our commitment to Europe, and underscore the key role of collaboration with industry, academia and policymakers for a pan-European ecosystem. These state-of-the-art technologies and facilities will foster innovation, creating new opportunities for talent attraction and ensuring that Europe will always be at the forefront of global technological advancements."





## Cyber Valley: Building A United Resilient Cyber Frontline

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With cloud breaches doubling and AI-driven attacks complicating the equation, threat response and cyber resilience is a core focus at the event. Fortinet, CrowdStrike, Kaspersky, Knowbe4, Proofpoint join a host of leading cyber companies exhibiting at **GITEX Cyber Valley**, alongside law enforcement leaders, global CISOs, and policymakers on-stage, including Brig. Gen. Dr. Volker Pötzsch, Chief of Division Cyber/IT & AI, Federal Ministry of Defence, Germany; H.E. Dr. Mohamed Al-Kuwaiti, Head of Cybersecurity, UAE Government; Miguel De Bruycker, Managing Director General, Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium; and Ugo Vignolo Lutati, Group CISO, Prada Group.

## GITEX Green Impact: Advancing Climate Imperatives for a Sustainable Future

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**GITEX Green Impact** connects the real accelerators of the green transition - innovators and investors - with over 100 startups and investors exploring how green hydrogen, bioenergy, and next-gen energy storage are moving from R&D to deployment. Key speakers are Gavin Towler, Chief Scientist for Sustainability Technologies & CTO, Honeywell; Julie Kitcher, Chief Sustainability Officer, Airbus; Lisa Reehten, Managing Director, Bosch Climate Solutions; Massimo Falcioni, Chief Competitiveness Officer, Abu Dhabi Investment Office; and Mounir Benaija, CTO - EV & Charging Infrastructure, TotalEnergies.





## Convening Global Startup Ecosystems From Over 60 Nations

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**GITEX EUROPE x Ai Everything** launches **North Star Europe**, the debut edition of the world's largest startup event (Expand North Star), gathering over 750 startups and 20 global unicorns - Qonto, Flutterwave, reMarkable, TransferMate, Solarisbank AG, Bolt, Flix, and Glovo.

The event features a curated international collection of early and growth-stage startups from Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Netherlands, Switzerland, Serbia, UK, UAE and more. Among the top startups, Neurocast.ai (Netherlands) advancing AI-powered neurotech for Alzheimer's research, CloudBees (Switzerland) - the delivery unicorn backed by Goldman Sachs, HSBC, and Lightspeed, and Semiqon (Finland), the world's first CMOS transistor with the ability to perform in cryogenic conditions.

Scouting new funding opportunities will be over 600 investors with \$1tn assets under management (AUM), including Germany's Earlybird VC, Austria's

SpeedInvest, Switzerland's B2Venture, Estonia's Startup Wise Guys, and USA's SOSV. **GITEX ScaleX** launches as a first-of-its-kind growth platform for scale-ups and late-stage companies, in partnership with AWS.

With SMEs making up 99% of European businesses, **GITEX SMEDEX** connects SMEs with international trade networks and investors, for funding, legal advisory and market access to scale innovations globally. Backed by EISMEA and ICC Digital Standards Initiative, the event features key SME ecosystem leaders advising on stage, including Milena Stoycheva, Chairperson of Board of Innovation, Ministry of Innovation and Growth, Bulgaria; and Oliver Grün, President, European Digital SME Alliance and BITMi; among others.

**GITEX EUROPE** is part of the GITEX global network tech and startup events, taking place in Germany, Morocco, Nigeria, Singapore, Thailand, and the UAE. For more information, please visit: [www.gitex-europe.com](http://www.gitex-europe.com).



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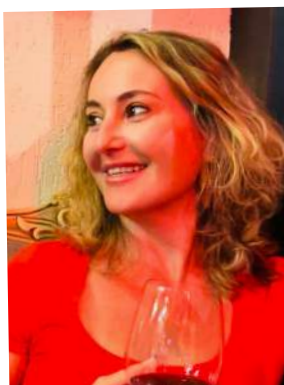
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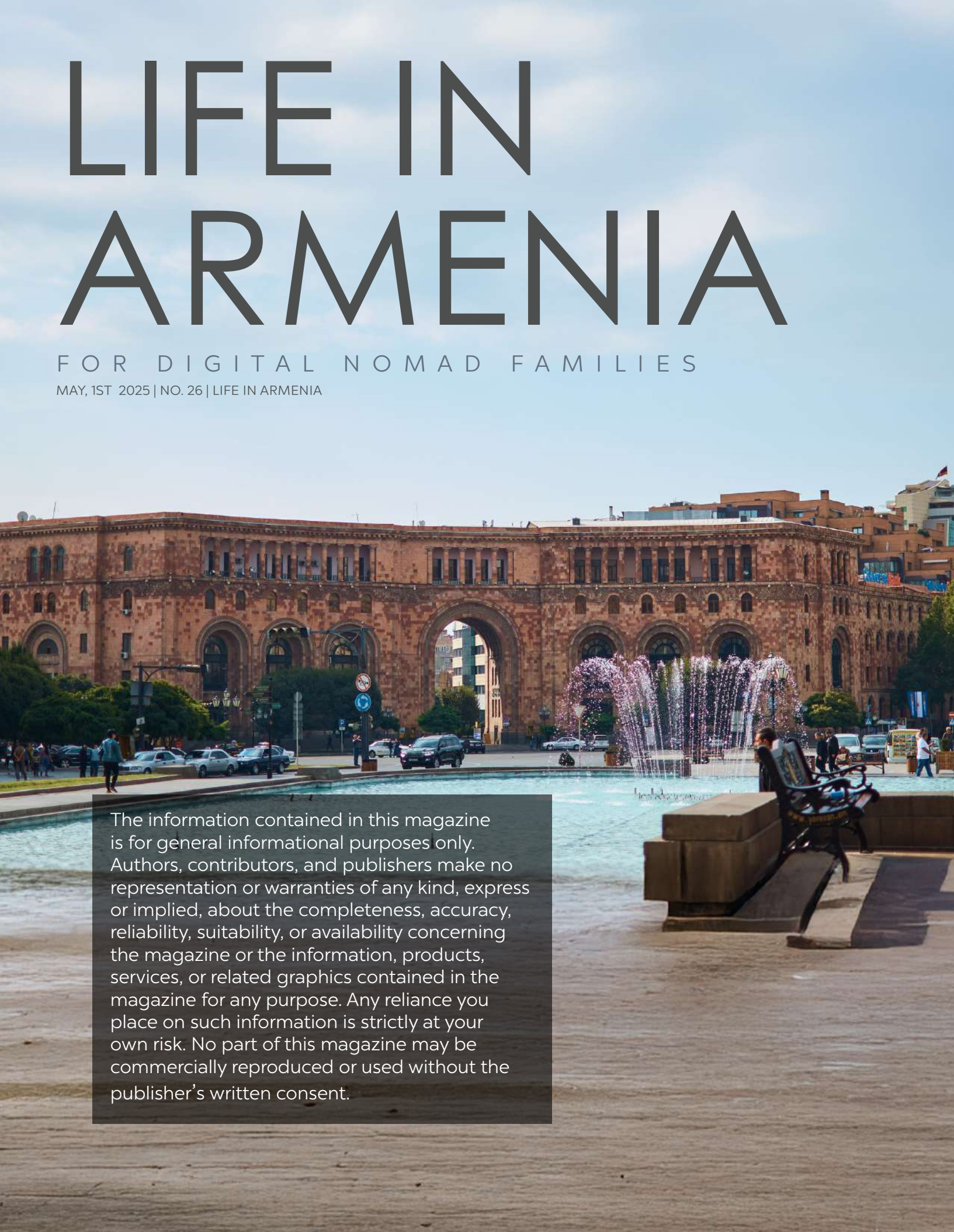




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