LEBANESE DELEGATION VISITS YEREVAN & MOSCOW

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By Hamo Moskofian, Yerevan-Moscow-Beirut, 30 October 2010
Lebanese-Armenian Member of Parliament Shant Chinchinian, accompanied by his advisor and Lebanese businessmen, visited Armenia and Russia in mid-October.

MP Shant Chinchinian (right) with
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Kirakossian (Left-Centre)

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Lebanese-Armenian Member of Parliament Shant Chinchinian, accompanied by his advisor and Lebanese businessmen, visited Armenia and Russia in mid-October.

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On the afternoon of Oct. 14 the delegation landed at Yerevan's Zvartnotz Airport and was warmly welcomed by His Excellency the Ambassador of Lebanon Mr. Jibrail Geara, who has been stationed in Armenia for the past seven years.
The following day Mr. Chinchinian and his advisor Jean Free were officially received by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Arman Kirakossian and Areg Hovhannisyan, the head of the Middle East Department. Among the topics discussed were Lebanese-Armenian relations, the reasons for the postponement of the Lebanese Prime Minister's visit to Armenia, and scholarships to be granted to seven Lebanese-Armenian students. Later the same day, the Lebanese delegation paid a visit to the Holy See of Echmiadzin and was received, for more than an hour, by His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians.

The day concluded with a banquet organized at the residence of the Lebanese ambassador. During the gathering Lebanese businessmen discussed the possibilities of investing in different sectors of the Armenian economy. In the evening the delegates participated in the tour of the Yerevan brandy Company (Pernod Ricard) and tasted the world -famous Armenian cognac.

On midday Oct. 16 a two-hour meeting was held at the offices of the Businessmen & Industrialists' Union of Armenia, headed by President Arsen Ghazaryan. The following morning, hours before their departure for Moscow, Mr.Chinchinian and the Lebanese delegation were hosted by Mrs. Hranush Hakobyan, the Armenian Minister of Diaspora Affairs. She promised to provide assistance for any project the delegation contemplated in Armenia, and jokingly offered to find MP Chinchinian a beautiful bride from her ministry. Just before flying to Moscow, the Lebanese businessmen

organized a banquet in honour of Ambassador Geara and Minister Hakobyan. The Ambassador said that he considered Armenia his second home.

Later that day the Lebanese delegation was welcomed at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport by the leaders of the Western Armenian Congress, the Moscow Armenians' Forum, Karen Mikaelian, businessman Igor Zargaryan, Prof. Sergey Kalindjian and others. The Moscow group invited the Lebanese delegation to an Armenian supper at the Moscow Novotel Hotel.

On the evening of Oct. 19 the Lebanese guests held a meeting at the Moscow "Manej" and later celebrated their visit with a banquet at the prestigeous "Gastinyi Dvor" restaurant, owned by a Hamshen Armenian businessmen Garnig Garanian.

The banquet was also attended by Krikor Anisonyan, editor-in- chief of Russian language Armenian Noah's Ark monthly, the owner of Cigar Clan publishing house and International magazine of the same name, Hamshen magazine (in Russian) editor Garig Garanian, Prof. Sergey Kalindjian, Igor Zargaryan and host Garnik Garanian.

The Lebanese delegation members said they were greatly impressed by the power and warmth of the Moscow Armenian hosts.

Just before flying back to Beirut, long-time friend,Vyacheslav Galustyan, the vice- president of the Union of Armenians of Russia, hosted, in the offices of the presidential compound on Red Square, a business meeting with the president of CtelLc Investments protection company, retired General V.V.Luzenko (who has served in Armenia) and the former advisor to President Levon Ter Bedrossyan, billionaire Artem Ataliants of Trest. Discussions were held for future business meetings.

The Lebanese delegation then departed to the airport for their flight to Beirut.