

DIASPORA INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF ARMENIAN ECONOMY

Posted on July 24, 2021 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



22 July 2021

[Keghart.org](https://keghart.org) reached out to [SASTIC](https://sastic.org/) founding member Haik Nazarian (HN) to learn more about the newly formed organization's initiatives in supporting Armenian economy. We present hereby the interview that was conducted on July 20, 2021.

Keghart: Tell us about the SASTIC initiative. What are SASTIC 's areas of focus and goals?

HN: SASTIC (Strategic Armenian Science and Technology Investment Community) was created after the 2020 Artsakh war. The idea behind SASTIC is to come together from all over the world, to bring expertise and financial contribution to a common platform. With the use of this platform, we create research infrastructures, establish new companies, form unions between these companies, assist in education and science to execute long-term strategic programs making our country stronger and prosperous.

In the past seven months we have been setting up the organization. Internal policies, decision-making processes, organizational structure, marketing and development strategies were implemented. SASTIC is registered in the Republic of Armenia (RoA) and the USA. Now there are 140 registered members from all over the world who have selected from one of the membership plans. In addition to the financial contribution many of the members have active roles, for example as mentors, members in working groups and committees. In addition, we have more than 400 supporters.

We have made the first call for project and idea submissions. Nearly 80 project proposals were submitted which were reviewed, categorized and some of them shortlisted for interviews. Furthermore, some of the projects are under mentorship and development phase. Hopefully soon they will be presented to our members for fund allocation.

I find it important to highlight that **SASTIC is an open organization, it is formed by individuals, any member can play a direct role**. Any fellow Armenian can join SASTIC through <https://sastic.org/>.

Keghart: How and who came up with the idea, and what was the motivation behind it? What significant change does SASTIC envision to make in entrepreneurship and job creation in Armenia?

HN: After the war many individuals being deeply concerned with the future of Armenia were asking "what can I do"? At that time Armen Khachatryan a scientist engineer from Cambridge, UK made a video-appeal to unite us around a common idea. Shortly after that we had a video conference, initially 19 of us from South Korea to USA joined. The "Initial Working Group" was formed. During the following weeks we combined all our ideas and thoughts together, SASTIC was establishing.

SASTIC has a unique place for the economic development of Armenia. It strives to utilize our limited resources in more efficient ways, encourages individuals to become active players in the economy, where cooperation and union are the key elements. For example, a SASTIC raw material or component producer becomes a supplier for a SASTIC finished goods producer. A SASTIC company is established (e.g. Marketing, accounting) to provide services to the other SASTIC

organizations. A SASTIC company cooperates with education provider to provide trainings, shares its facilities, equipment or labs. Another SASTIC offers internships and jobs. SASTIC members can become entrepreneurs, investors, owners, and wealth generators. We generate revenue for reinvestment, to ensure a sustainable growth. The Mondragon Corporation is our inspiration.

Keghart: What makes SASTIC stand out from other similar NGOs?

HN: SASTIC is a non-profit organization and is registered as an NGO. This is the best legal structure for social entrepreneurship in Armenia and any profit acquired from SASTIC's social entrepreneurship will be used solely for the achievement of its statutory goals. Its operational procedures are based on business processes. SASTIC is all about investment: investment of knowledge, skills, and finances to generate value. It is comprised of and formed by individuals, has a flat structure and is fully transparent. The organization is accountable to its members. Our **members are the organization**. Anybody can become a member and can get involved, there are no boundaries. Before joining SASTIC I didn't know any other SASTIC member.

Keghart: What is Sastic's strategic plan and how will it bring real changes while taking into account the current situation in Armenia?

HN: Our strategic plan consists of the following:

- Strengthen our well-structured organization that operates towards long and short-term goals.
- Establish educational and human resources development programs to support our mission.
- Operate SASTIC programs in full power which in turn lead to the creation of new jobs.
- Maintain a clear picture of infrastructure needs in Armenia and support their development.
- Be involved in Science, Research and Development.

To improve the current situation in Armenia **we take a direct and hands on approach**. We get involved from the onset through advising, mentoring, assisting, developing and investing.

Keghart: Do you foresee any legislative, administrative, political, infrastructure/policy obstacles that SASTIC might face? Do you have planned solutions in the event of encountering such challenges?

HN: I think it is normal that there will be certain challenges in areas named. Fortunately, we have a strong Legal and Business Development committee that is involved in all the processes. In case of obstacles, we make a general public call and so far, always several experts turn-up to give a hand. SASTIC has established a healthy working environment.

It is important to mention that SASTIC is not involved in lobbying or influencing government policies or legislations. It is a non-partisan organization.

Keghart: Can SASTIC have a potential contribution to the growing demands and challenges of the Armenia – Diaspora relations? Does SASTIC have the potential to provide a new culture of innovation for Armenians to work collectively in the best interest of Armenia?

HN: It is in the essence of SASTIC to establish links between Armenia and Diaspora. Our members

come from different countries, a good number of them are based in Armenia. We work together very productively. SASTIC is a good example that Armenians with different backgrounds, from different communities can work together well. **Respect, integrity, trust and our common goals unite us.** Please see link to our first [General Meeting](#) that took place on 12 June 2021.

Keghart: In your opinion which sector of Armenia's industry needs to develop most to make Armenia safe, secure and sustainable.

HN: SASTIC focuses on high-technologies, science and research. These provide us with a wide spectrum for operation. Nowadays the high technologies are everywhere. We have formed expert working groups to focus on each specific sector/industry. Some examples are education, renewable energies, digital transformation, war recovery/Prosthetics, Agriculture, 3Rs, AI/Robotics. In addition to core workgroups, we have also established supporting committees and cross-workgroups for example Project review, Legal and Business Development, Management and Operations as well as Marketing.

In case of demand and necessity we can expand our operations.

In my opinion, we will have safe, secure, and sustainable Armenia when the country develops in a very fast pace in the next 5, 10, 15 years. Education is very important. Creation of high-tech driven companies and organizations in various sectors and industries will make Armenia globally competitive. With modern high-skill labor force we can foster efficient usage of our limited resources, create well paid jobs, stop emigration, and encourage immigration.

I believe if SASTIC and more similar organisations had been able to establish 20-25 years ago (in addition to existing ones) we would have been in a better position today, probably with 4 million population, in a stable and strong country. It is not late though, we should start from somewhere after all.

About Haik Nazarian

Born in Armenia in 1977, HN also has western Armenian family roots. He graduated from Melkonian Education Institute, Cyprus in 1997. He is a Business Process and IT Team Leader working in a major automotive company. HN lived and worked in a number of countries, in numerous sectors. He currently resides in Germany.

There are no comments yet.