
■■■■■■■ **LOBBY PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN ENMITY IN ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS'**

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23 January 2013 Trend The Armenian diaspora and their lobbying efforts worldwide have successfully protected Armenia's interests in the international arena to the detriment of Azerbaijan, concludes a report issued by the Brussels-based think tank European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC). The Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (a U.S. law that bans Azerbaijan from U.S. aid) and the campaigns against the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Southern Gas Corridor meant to reduce Europe's dependence on energy supplies from Russia, are only some of the most evident examples, say analysts at the ESISC, PR Newswire reported. Propaganda campaigns have been carried out in order to depict Azerbaijan as a pariah state in Europe, while at the same time promoting the image of Armenia as a well consolidated democracy. "Armenia has been using pressure groups in order to influence the political agenda in the USA and Europe toward Yerevan's interests," the report declares. "Isolating Baku from international assistance and depicting it as a rogue state are some of the activities carried out by Armenian lobbies worldwide," the report says. According to the report, since its independence, Baku has had to struggle for its territorial integrity, against poverty and the risk of domestic terrorism. In this regard, the Armenian lobby has contributed to isolate the country from international assistance, hence slowing down the process for the building of a stronger civil society and a more democratic form of government. "Armenia occupies around 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories such as Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts as a result of an armed aggression by separatist Armenian paramilitary groups in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s." However, Baku has turned out successful in coping with other contingences such as poverty and terrorism, says the report. In fact, according to the World Bank, Azerbaijan has been able to reduce poverty from 50 percent to 7.6 percent in the period 2001-2011, with a drop in unemployment to 4.2 percent and the implementation of social welfare reforms contributing to such decline.

Kaynak/Source: