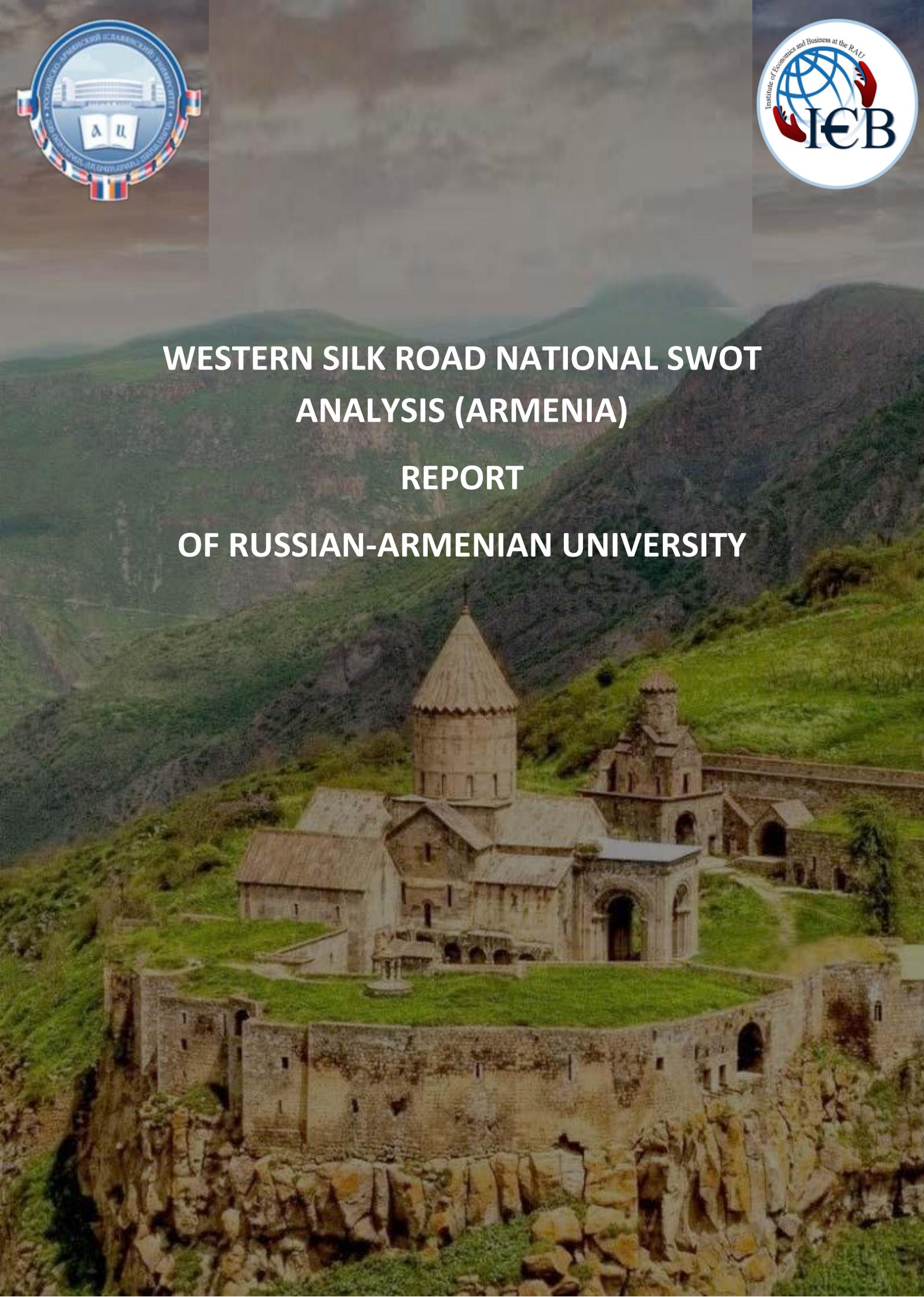




**WESTERN SILK ROAD NATIONAL SWOT  
ANALYSIS (ARMENIA)  
REPORT  
OF RUSSIAN-ARMENIAN UNIVERSITY**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Great Silk Road was an ancient system of trade routes between the East and the West. It stretched from China and reached the Mediterranean Sea. This net was used from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD and even more.

Many people assume that Silk Road first served as a route for exporting Chinese silk to Western countries, however many findings show that different goods produced in different countries were exported and imported – the road was a good opportunity for exchange of goods between many countries.

As it is known, a long list of exotic goods comprised: frankincense and myrrh, jasmine and amber, cardamom and nutmeg, ginseng and bile of a python, carpets and fabrics, dyes and minerals, diamonds, jade, corals, ivory and "fish tusks", gold and silver bullions, fur and coins, bows, arrows, swords and spears. Horses, camels and elephants, rhinoceros and lions, cheetahs and gazelles, hawks and falcons, peacocks, parrots and ostriches passed the routes of Silk Road to be sold for higher prices. Cultivated crops, such as grapes, peaches, apricots, melons, vegetables as well as spices and sugar enhanced their geographic distribution with the help of merchants. Aside from movement of goods and animal trade, Silk Road served as a channel for dissemination of fashion and artistic styles that became widespread in a new ethno-cultural environment.

Besides, the Great Silk Road played a tremendous role in dissemination of religious ideas. On the routes of the Silk Road different missionaries "carried" their faith to foreign lands.

Throughout the history the Great Silk Road became more and more popular and increasingly well-travelled, but connected with new geographical discoveries of sea routes, navigation and ship-building, maritime trade got more importance, and land routes lost their previous role.

Today more and more people study their historical roots in order to know the spiritual backgrounds of their countries and their role in the world culture. It can also be done in the case of reviving the Western Silk Road with the help of international collaboration in the spheres of culture, tourism, diplomacy, trade and science.

Geographically Armenia is situated on the crossroads between Asia and Europe, the East and the West, that's why it used to have a very important role on the Silk Road. And this is one of the reasons that the Republic of Armenia is very interested in the realization of the project of the Western Silk Road.

## **2. REVIEW OF THE SECONDARY SOURCES' RESEARCH**

For a long time Armenia was an important crossroad on the Silk Road, and the Armenian people had an important role in the development of this road realizing trade and spreading culture between the West and the East.

From ancient times Armenia, or as it was called before in many historical documents - Ararat country, was mentioned on maps among which there are Babylonian maps dated back to the 1<sup>st</sup> millenium BC. Armenia is mentioned on the oldest map of the world called Babylonian map. It is dated back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, and among many countries mentioned on the map Armenia is the only one which exists till today. Examining Greek, Roman, Arabic and Persian maps of following centuries increasing interest towards Armenia can be clearly seen.

Highly developed level of art and craft, richness in different precious metals, high quality of wine, magnificent carpets and speed of unique warhorses attracted many travellers to Armenia. Armenian trade routes were connected with those of China, India, Middle Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia, Minor Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, basin of the Mediterranean Sea.

Armenia not only imported many goods from different countries, but also exported various goods to the international market. Armenia took part in international money circulation, the proof of which can be the coins of different countries found during excavations in Artashat, Dvin and in other ancient cities of Armenia.

According to many historical sources, a great number of travellers preferred to pass through the territory of Armenia for several reasons - developed urban life, hospitable villages, little danger of being robbed and climatic conditions.

Still in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, in the reign of Tigran II the Great (95-55 BC), one of the most important policies of the king was ruling over trade routes.

For the first time silk is mentioned in Armenia still in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. When describing the funeral of the Armenian king Artashes I (190-160 BC), the Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) mentions that the king's body was covered with silk. The next information about silk refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. It is connected with one of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ - Saint Thaddeus, the one who with Saint Bartholomew became the first to preach Christianity in Armenia and to found Armenian Apostolic Church. When preaching Christianity in Armenia, Saint Thaddeus ordained a bishop named Addeh who used to sew mitras from silk.

According to survey of several investigators, Armenian Highland and some neighboring regions were one of the main cradles of carpet-making. For carpet-weaving only natural materials

were used. Rests of carpets dated back to the 7-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC were found in Karmir blur (Red hill, in Yerevan).

Other objects of export were garments, belts and jewellery. Arab historians mention that though the belts were quite expensive, many traders used to buy them as they had a very good quality and were beautifully ornamented with precious and semiprecious stones.

Armenia was rich in cereals such as wheat and barley, leguminous plants, wine and beer, goats, sheep, swine, bulls, cows, hens and horses. About all this one can read in the works of Xenophon.

Armenian horses had a great demand. Nut tree, red and yellow arsenic, mineral pitch, mercury, blue copperas, silver, lead and medicinal herbs were exported in large quantities.

Many countries, including Rome, used to import special plant and mineral dyes – nutgall, madder the roots of which contain natural colorants, cochineal – a special red color received from cochineal insects etc. The astonishing character of these natural dyes can be seen in Armenia and in all over the world where there are Armenian carpets and Armenian manuscripts. Not a single tourist can be indifferent towards one of the treasures of Armenia, Matenadaran – a museum of ancient manuscripts which contain miniatures, the colors of which are so bright as if there were painted one day before.

An interesting piece of information about Armenian craftsmen and masters can be read in ancient chronicles according to which Armenian kings of Cilicia would agree to have commercial relations with Venetian merchants only if they stopped “stealing” Armenian masons.

From ancient times there were several Armenian cities flourishing on the Silk Road – Van, Armavir, Ervandashat, Artashat, Tigranakert, Dvin, Jugha (Julfa), Kars, Karin (Erzurum), Artsn, Manazkert etc.

The capital city Artashat was an important centre of international trade. It was the most important trade center between Byzantium and Persia. The excavations prove the historical documents.

After Artashat Dvin became an important trade city where both Armenian and foreign products were bought and sold. For many centuries Dvin continued to be an important place where silk was produced.

Unfortunately, trade routes not always were peaceful as there were invasions of Turk-Seljuks, Mongol-Tartars, Ak Koyunlu (White Sheep Turkomans) and Kara Koyunlu (Black Sheep Turkomans), Ottomans etc. As a result of historical difficult periods, the Armenian Genocide and

deportations of Armenians from Cilicia, Western Armenia and some part of Eastern Armenia, economic and commercial role of Armenia decreased.

Armenia and Armenian people have had a huge role in the world civilization. Armenian vestige can be seen not only in the Republic of Armenia, but also in all the territory of Armenian Highland (Historical Armenia), as well as in the Holy Land as Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity as the state religion still in 301 and in many places.

As Armenia is a country with long history and traditions, it has a rich gastronomy and interesting festivals, unique folk music and traditional dances. Some of them will be described below.

Armenian cuisine is as ancient as its history, as the land it is standing on. Armenians are said to be among the most hospitable peoples in the world. The abundance of meat on Armenian tables is the result of the most ancient development of cattle breeding in Armenian uplands which led to such a variety of livestock and poultry. Cattle breeding was also the source of various dairy products – basically brine-ripened cheeses as well as sour-milk products which serve as the basis for traditional Armenian dishes and beverages.

Early beginning of agriculture in the fertile valleys of Armenia caused the application of various cereals in Armenian cuisine - spelt, millet, barley, wheat, rice; beans - string beans, beans, lentil, mountain peas to say nothing of great variety of vegetables and greens which are a must of Armenian feasts.

Traditionally Armenians cooked food on fire. The clay furnace began to be called tonir and has retained this name. Armenians used clay kitchen ware, too. Tonir has been used for cooking bread, mashes, fish and poultry, vegetables, soups and other dishes. By the way, tonir was borrowed by all people of Transcaucasia becoming an integral part of their national culinary. Armenia in general has contributed a lot in term of cooking. Thus, many authentic Armenian dishes later became known in Europe thanks to Persians and Turks as the dishes of their national cuisines (for example, dolma). In their turn the cuisines of neighbor countries have enriched the culinary culture of Armenia.

Armenian cooking techniques are rather complicated. The most difficult to cook are meat, fish and vegetable dishes which require stuffing, whipping, puree and souffle making as it takes a lot of time and work.

Another feature of Armenian cuisine is a great number of greengrocery and spices in preparation of dishes. Armenian cooks use more than 300 kinds of wild-growing grasses and flowers which are used as seasonings or even as basic dishes.

Fragrant spices are very popular: pepper, coriander, fenugreek, black pepper, mint, tarragon, basil, thyme and of course garlic and onion; and for sweet dishes - cinnamon, cardamom, clove, saffron and vanilla.

All these features make Armenian dishes unique, unrivaled, delicious and fragrant - a real treat for any gourmet and connoisseur of true culinary traditions.

In Armenia there are a great number of festivals among which the following ones are of great interest:

### **Tolma festival**

Tolma is considered to be one of the most delicious national dishes of Armenia. It is prepared from minced meat, which is wrapped in grape leaves and is served with the sauce made of the fermented product “matsun” and garlic. The annual festival of dolma in Armenia is a great opportunity to get acquainted with this delicious meat dish. The festival is held in Armavir region, near the memorial complex “Sardarapat”. During it Armenian cooks prepare different types of tolma and compete for the main prize.

All the participants are given the opportunity to try both tolma and other national dishes. The event is accompanied by traditional dances and songs.

### **Carpet Festival**

Armenian carpets have an old history and are famous not only within their native land but also abroad. Carpet festival presents a great opportunity for masters to demonstrate their works and for clients to get acquainted with this amazing craft and even buy the most beautiful exemplars. The event takes place every year in a cozy and picturesque town Dilijan which is said to be “Armenian Switzerland”, and where the 14<sup>th</sup> member of the United World Colleges is situated. In addition to the carpet exhibition, guests will also get acquainted with other works of applied art.

### **Festival of honey and berries**

Festival of honey and berries is organized annually in Shamshadin region, which is considered to be the center of honey making. Every year in May about 3000 participants take part in this interesting event. Both different kinds of honey and various local berries are demonstrated here. And it is also important to note that the festival is not limited by the demonstration of honey, there is also provided a great opportunity to get acquainted with various kinds of arts and crafts.

### **Barbecue Festival**

Of course, barbecue is a meat dish known everywhere; however Armenians have their own special recipe and call it “khorovats”. In Armenia, only men are involved in the process of barbecue preparation. They buy all the necessary products beforehand and then prepare special marinade for meat. Another national peculiarity is a vegetable side dish prepared from tomatoes, eggplants, and green pepper which are roasted on the fire and then served with meat. “Khorovats” is considered to be a national dish and not by chance that a festival is annually organized in its honor. It takes place in Lori region, in Ahtala monastery-fortress. The monastery is well-known for its unique frescos. Both famous cooks and amateurs present more than 40 different kinds of barbecue. The event is accompanied with songs, dances and interesting games.

### **Wine festival**

Wine-making in Armenia has very ancient history. This fact is proved by the recent archaeological excavation in the caves of Areni village, where the oldest winery in the world was found. In the cave Areni 1 the oldest leather shoe and the oldest brain were found as well. And it is here in Areni village where every year in October the wine festival takes place. This colorful event is accompanied by the vivid parade of the best winemakers of Armenia and song and dances.

### **Festival of national costumes**

This colorful festival presents the national costumes of 15 states of the Great Hayk (Historical Armenia was called Great Hayk and had 15 states). Interesting programme with dances, songs, and puppet shows are organized for guests, and everyone can purchase various works of Armenian masters of applied art. By visiting this festival, everyone plunges into a colorful traditional atmosphere, meets interesting customs and gets a feeling for the Armenian hospitality.

### **Festival of sheep shearing**

This new annual festival is a competition of sheep shearing, in which all the inhabitants of Halidzor village take part. The most interesting is the fact that the shearing is done with old scissors.

After the shearing, the wool is immediately transferred to skilled women who at an amazing speed make thread for carpet weaving. The guests of the festivals taste various national sweets, purchase souvenirs and have a good time.

### **International Film Festival “Golden Apricot”**

Film Festival “Golden Apricot” was launched in 2004 and since that time has been annually held in the capital of Armenia - Yerevan. Each year during the festival, 120-150 Armenian films of different genres are nominated. The main prize is the “Golden Apricot” awarded to the winners of

the four major categories: “Armenian Panorama”, “Feature films”, “Documentary”, “Short film”. And especially apricot has been chosen as a symbol as it is the cradle of apricot is considered to be the Armenian Highland. The Latin name of apricot comes to prove the mentioned fact - *Prúnus armeniáca*.

Apricot tree is used to prepare a special musical instrument called “duduk” which is included in UNESCO World Heritage.

The Armenian dance heritage has been one of the oldest, richest, and most varied in the region. The traditions of many centuries contributed to the development of the rich diversity in Armenian dance. The dance itself is divided into two categories: dances which were executed to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and song-dances which were performed to vocal accompaniment.

There are different types of dances: religious, military, labour, wedding etc. Besides, each region and province in Armenia has always had its own variant of the dances and national costumes. Through theatrical dance, territorial districts expressed their life and customs, cultures and traditions. Every movement in a dance has its own history and meaning.

Armenians have had a long tradition of folk music from the antiquity. Most spread musical instruments are qamancha, qanon, dhol (double-headed hand drum), zurna, blul, shvi, saz, duduk etc. Other instruments are often used such as violin and clarinet. Armenians used to use special musical notes called “khaz”. Komitas, the father of Armenian classical music, examined these notes and could read many of them. Unfortunately, many of the work of Komitas were destroyed during the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, and Komitas, seeing the terrible massacres of his compatriots, had a serious psychological depression after which he couldn’t work any more. But he had managed to go to Armenian cities and villages and to write the notes of the folk songs and musics. Thanks to him, thousands of Armenian songs have been saved. Next to the name of Komitas some other names should be mentioned as well: Sayat-Nova (18<sup>th</sup> c.), Aram Khachatourian, Arno Babajanian, Djivan Gasparian and others.

#### Intangible Cultural Heritage of Armenia:

1. Duduk and its music (2008)
2. Armenian cross-stones (khach-kar) art. Symbolism and craftsmanship of Khachkars (2010)
3. Performance of the Armenian epic of “Daredevils of Sassoun” or “David of Sassoun” (2012)

4. Lavash, the preparation, meaning and appearance of traditional bread as an expression of culture in Armenia (2014)

World Heritage Sites of Armenia:

1. Cathedral and Churches of Echmiatsin and the Archaeological Site of Zvartnots (2000)
2. Monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin (1996)
3. Monastery of Geghard and the Upper Azat Valley (2000)

### 3. SWOT ANALYSIS WITH FINDINGS

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- favorable location of the region in the context of the project of Western Silk Road</li> <li>- rich natural and recreational potential, as well as cultural and historical heritage, several sites of which are included in the list of world heritage of UNESCO</li> <li>- experience in organizing important international and regional cultural and sport events and entertainments</li> <li>- famous traditional Armenian hospitality</li> <li>- highly qualified specialists in the sphere of tourism and hospitality</li> <li>- comparatively cheaper prices of touristic goods and services</li> <li>- comparatively higher quality of services</li> <li>- availability of free economic zones</li> <li>- availability of international airport</li> <li>- policy of “open air”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not enough level of development of railway infrastructure</li> <li>- not enough mobilization of local and foreign investment in tourism</li> <li>- not enough branding of the region at international levels</li> <li>- low level of usage of recreational and historical-cultural potential of the country in touristic activities</li> <li>- necessity of reconstruction of some touristic objects</li> <li>- lack of stimulating factors for the development of inner tourism</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- international achievements in science, sport and other spheres</li> <li>- liberal visa policy</li> </ul>	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- potential for development of different types of tourism (religious, ethnic, business, ecological, agronomical, sport, extreme, medical, event etc.)</li> <li>- improvement of tourism infrastructures and material-technological basis</li> <li>- acceleration of integration of Armenia in the project of Western Silk Road</li> <li>- creation of favorable investment conditions in the sphere of tourism</li> <li>- active involvement of Armenian diaspora in increase of recognizability and creation of the image of the country</li> <li>- collaboration with privileged conditions with the countries of EU within the framework of the system GPS+.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stagnation in economy</li> <li>- competition with neighboring countries (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran and Georgia)</li> <li>- reduction of profitability and competitiveness of regional tour-product in national and international markets as a result of decrease of touristic attractiveness of Armenia</li> <li>- unfavorable changes in the legislation</li> <li>- natural cataclysms in the region or in the neighboring regions</li> <li>- outflow of qualified specialists from the country.</li> </ul>

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SWOT analysis allows us to conclude that in the case of purposeful regional politics it is possible to neutralize the majority of weaknesses of tourism potential of Armenia.

Among the factors of increasing the attractiveness of tourism in Armenia we can mention the following ones:

- Unique natural and resource potential and cultural and historical heritage;
- Great number of tour-companies and free labor force existing in the market;
- Today there can be seen an increase in the number of qualified specialists in the sphere of tourism thanks to the improvement of the quality of education in the departments of “Tourism” and “Service”. In particular, in the Chair of Management, Business and Tourism of

the Institute of Economy and Business of Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University highly-qualified specialists are trained to be able to conduct serious analyses especially for the development of tourism, including that of the Western Silk Road.

We think that for the development of tourism in the Western Silk Road, in particular in Armenia, it is necessary to pay attention to the following points:

- To efficiently use the recreational and historical-cultural potential of the country;
- To sufficiently develop touristic infrastructures as a result of involvement of domestic and foreign capital;
- To have an effective marketing policy including proper international branding of Armenia especially as an important part of the Western Silk Road;
- To reconstruct some touristic monuments;
- To work out and realize plans in order to stimulate the development of inner tourism;
- To improve legislation and normative-legal basis of the development of tourism;
- To provide training for increasing qualification of specialists of tourism, based on Russian-Armenian University;
- To provide touristic companies with qualified support for advancement of services, publication of information materials (catalogues, booklets), designing touristic web-site of the project of the Western Silk Road, organizing TV and radio transmissions for Armenia and foreign countries (e.g. TV transmissions on TV channels, articles in newspapers and journals) etc.;
- To organize a competition of scientific and research work among students, masters and young scientists of Armenia about “Brand of Armenia in the Western Silk Road”;
- Based on Russian-Armenian University to organize scientific-practical conferences about “Development of tourism in the Western Silk Road” to which leading local and foreign experts of the industry of tourism and hospitality will be invited;
- Based on the results of conferences and competitions of scientific and research work to work out effective conception of the development of tourism in the Western Silk Road, particularly in Armenia.

All suggested activities will become a basis for working out and realizing effective conceptions of the development of tourism in the Western Silk Road, particularly in Armenia, which will enable to:

1. Develop economic and cultural relations;

2. Collaborate for the benefit of sustainable development of tourism;
3. Work out and realize innovations in the industry of tourism;
4. Satisfy needs of tourists in receiving qualitative services;
5. Create additional jobs;
6. Increase attractiveness of the country for investments;
7. Improve the well-being of the inhabitants of the country.

## **5. FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH**

One of the first steps of the development of tourism in the country must become the decision of theoretical-methodological problems of this region, the main directions of which must become the study of tourism as a whole as well as that of its infrastructures and separate types of scientific and marketing services in particular.

United World Organization seriously encourages tour-product “Great Silk Road” where Armenia has had its important role and, as a part of this new tour-product, attracts new markets.

The Silk Road was not a fixed route, it had different branches, and almost all the touristic itineraries of the Republic of Armenia have some elements of the Silk Road.

As an example some itineraries can be discussed:

- 1) Yerevan – Sevan – Noratus – Orbelyan (Selim) Caravanserai – Jermuk.

This itinerary starts from the capital city of Armenia and goes to the region of Gegharquniq - the largest region of Armenia - where the biggest lake of the Republic of Armenia is located. Lake Sevan is very often called “the blue pearl of Armenia”. It is the second largest and highest freshwater lake of the world. In one of the villages of the lake – in Noratus - one can see huge number of khachkars – cross-stones – which are considered to be unique cultural heritage of Armenia. Continuing the way and admiring beautiful landscapes, one can see one of the well-preserved caravanserais of Medieval Armenia – Orbelyan (Selim) caravanserai, built in 1332. Jermuk is a town well-known for its mineral waters, beautiful waterfalls and unique landscapes.

- 2) Jermuk – Tatev – Ukhtasar – Goris

Tatev is a very famous monastic complex of Medieval Armenia which was not only a center of spiritual life but also that of scientific life. In order to get to Tatev, one can take the “Wings of Tatev” – a cable car – which is registered in the book of Guinness World Records as the longest double reversible cable car of the world (length - 5752 m). After Tatev one can go to Ukhtasar which is a mountain where there is a great number of ancient petroglyphs. It is an interesting

experience to walk around the lake on the top of the mountain and try to find as many petroglyphs as possible. Goris is a small town which has unique architecture.

### 3) Goris – Noravanq – Areni 1 – Artashat (Khor virap) – Yerevan

Noravanq is a medieval monastery which is one of the pearls of the Armenian architecture surrounded by huge cliffs and mountains. Near the gorge which leads to the monastery there is a cave called Arenia 1. This is the cave where the oldest shoe, the oldest winery, the oldest brain and some other old and “oldest” objects were found. Areni is the centre of Armenian wine-making. After Areni one can go to Artashat which was one of the capitals of Armenia and an important trade city on the Silk Road. Khor virap monastery is situated on one of the hills of the city. It is built in the place where the founders of the Armenian Apostolic Church – Saint Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew met each other in Armenia and where later the first katoghikos (supreme patriarch of the Armenian Church) Saint Grigor Lusavorich (Gregory the Illuminator) passed 13 years of his life. It is one of the most important pilgrimage places of Armenia.

The practice shows that it is necessary to have decentralization of the touristic business of Armenia as the greatest part of the touristic resources is located in the regions of Armenia but the income mainly goes to the capital city. From this point of view, it is necessary for the regions to be involved in touristic business as equal partners and to receive appropriate income, which will undoubtedly raise interest and will create new impulses of development.

Being represented independently, Armenia has quite a limited market niche. A European or a Japanese tourist will hardly come to the region having an aim to see only Armenia, Mountainous Karabagh, Georgia or Iran. S/he might wish to justify such a long way and considerable amount of expenses. That’s why processes of integration with neighbour countries are seriously discussed by the states in order to form a combined inter-regional tour-product.

It will be advisable to conduct social and experimental research among tourists. This research will enable not only to react the changes of the demand, but also to form some ideas about tendencies of the development of touristic services in the Republic of Armenia.

Armenia’s important goal in the sphere of tourism is the development of touristic infrastructures. Working out and realizing several events should be addressed to the decision of such problems as expansion of the range of touristic itineraries, streamlining of seasonal variations, construction and reconstruction of accommodations, safeguarding of guarantees of personal, medical and ecological security of tourists, creation of opportunities of modern relations, ensuring of

fast money transfer, wide usage of traveler's checks and other means of payment, financial transactions, reduction of tariffs of air transportation etc.

In touristic business of Armenia the most difficult problem continues to be the problem of investments, which must be paid a special attention to in connection with the lack of financial resources.

Armenia has already put the basis of developing the tourism and making the country an attractive spot for tourists. However, in order to reach the needed level of the development of tourism it is necessary to conduct a fundamental research in many directions. A system approach is needed for having desired decisions for existing problems.

Special scientific research in the sphere of tourism and touristic activities starts to play a bigger and bigger role in the development of tourism as multifaceted, massive, complex social-cultural and social-economic phenomenon of the modern world. These research is conducted by geographers, historians, economists, culture experts, sociologists, psychologists, physiologists and specialists of other sciences.

A complex scientific approach becomes more and more needed in formation and realization of touristic projects. At the moment there is a lack of a state support for theoretical and methodological researches in the sphere of tourism. Therefore, this problems are being solved due to grants received for scientific research of universities.

Interdisciplinary nature of tourism makes it necessary to strengthen the complex scientific approach when studying its peculiarities as an important social-economic phenomenon. A high level of complex scientific activities will be assured only in the case of gathering together representatives of various fields of science who study tourism from different points of view. The uniting power of them can become the university.

Russian-Armenian University is happy to support the initiative and is ready to become an official member of the academic research group of the project “Initiative for the development of tourism in the Western Silk Road”. In the case of appropriate financing, Russian-Armenian University will be able to use all its intellectual potential of specialists and conduct a valuable research for the development of tourism in the Western Silk Road.

**ACCOMMODATION INDUSTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

Nowadays in Armenia there are 341 accommodation providers (hotels, motels, sanatoriums, guest house, hostels, camps) with 10.337 rooms and 20.516 beds. 36% of the mentioned objects are in Yerevan (124 accommodation providers, 3.583 rooms and 6.153 beds), 64% - in regions (217 accommodation providers, 6.754 rooms and 14.363 beds).

There are 188 hotels (7.015 rooms and 13.577 beds), among which

- 71 hotels in Yerevan – 3.203 rooms and 5.516 beds,
- 117 hotels in regions – 3.816 rooms and 8.061 beds.

In Armenia, mostly in villages there are also more than 210 B&Bs.

In Armenia there are 21 qualified accommodation providers, among which

- 13 hotels (2 - 5\* deluxe, 1 - 5\*, 7- 4\*, 1 - 3\*, 1- 2\*, 1- 1\*),
- 1 boardinghouse (III category),
- 7 guest house (2 - II category, 5 - III category):

In recent years, many new hotels have been built in Armenia:

In 2013 – 464 rooms

In 2014 – 473 rooms

In 2015 – 392 rooms

In 2016 – 155 rooms

It is planned to have 500 rooms more in the near future. Many of the hotels are planned to belong to famous international hotel groups.

<b>Report ACCOMMODATION INDUSTRY IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA</b>				
<b>Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Type</b>		
		Hotel	Guest house	Other accommodation providers (houses, sanatorium-restaurants, cottages)
Aragatsotn	4	1	3	
Gegharkunik	34	8	2	24
Lori	28	8	8	12
Kotayk	46	15	26	5
Shirak	11	8		3
Syunik	35	6	11	18
Vayots Dzor	20	11	6	3
Tavush	22	10	4	8

<b>KEY FACTS OF TOURIZM SECTOR OF ARMENIA</b>				
	<b>Indicators names</b>	<b>Measurement unit</b>	<b>Year</b>	
			<b>2015</b>	<b>2016 (forecast)</b>
1	GDP: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION OF TOURIZM SPHERE TO GDP OF RA	bn	183.4	273.5
		% of total GDP	3.8	4
2	GDP: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TOURIZM SPHERE TO GDP OF RA	bn	660.9	1003.9
		% of total GDP	13.7	13.5
3	EMPLOYMENT: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF RA	jobs	40000	43000
		% of total employment	3.3	4.1
4	EMPLOYMENT: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF RA	jobs	147000	149000
		% of total employment	12.2	13.4
5	VISITOR EXPORTS	bn	437.5	458
		% of total export	29.6	34.4
6	INVESTMENT IN TOURIZM SPHERE	bn	40.6	41.2
		% of total investment	4.8	6.3

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