

Diasporan Perspectives Call for Papers

Armenia Since Independence: A Study in Transformation



**CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION**

**Requirements, Criteria
and Conditions 2026**



Introduction

The socio-political system in Armenia is going through shockwaves. First, the popular uprising of 2018 known as the “Armenian Velvet Revolution” inspired hope for positive change, after long years of stagnation. The promises of the Velvet Revolution were to fight against corruption and against electoral fraud, yet remained vague on the specifics. Two years later, history accelerated with a series of wars and defeats: the Second Karabakh War of 2020 destroyed the Armenian defences, and in 2023 after nine months of blockade Azerbaijan launched yet another attack, occupying what remained of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian Artsakh was totally ethnically cleansed.

Following the Second Karabakh War, the predecessor of *Diasporan Perspectives*¹ initiated a research project which led to two publications on the Second Karabakh War.² With this Call for Papers, the scope of the earlier research project is being expanded considerably to study the evolution of Armenia during the last decades on several fronts: the political system, power structures, mechanisms of decision making and institutional culture(s), as well as closely related socio-economic factors. What were the structural problems in the country that produced the shocks of 2018, 2020 and 2023? Did the Velvet Revolution produce changes in the socio-economic structure of the country or was it only a “political revolution”?³ What were the gaps between official discourses and ideological trends? Did institutions change, and if so, how? How were decisions taken?

The scope of Armenia’s transformation covers three phases: the period of Soviet collapse and Armenia’s independence, the period of stabilization of the political system in Armenia under the second and third presidents in what could be described as a “hybrid regime”⁴, and the period of revolution, war and uncertainty.

¹ By this we mean the research team that was led by Vicken Cheterian and supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The research initiative became one of the dimensions that contributed to the setting up of the *Diasporan Perspectives* (www.diasporanperspectives.org).

² Ashot Voskanyan et al., *44. Պարտություն: 2020-ի Արցախյան Պատերազմը Իրողություններ եւ Հետեւողություններ (44. Defeat: The 2020 Artsakh War: Facts and Consequences)*, Yerevan: Armenian Research Centre in Humanities, 2025 (in Armenian); and London: Gomidas Publishers (in English). And Vicken Cheterian (ed.), *Կոտրված վահան. Արցախյան 44-օրյա պատերազմի բազմաշերտ վերլուծություն (The 44-Day War, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Struggle for Nagorno-Karabakh)* Yerevan: Newmag Publishing, 2025 (in Armenian); and London: I.B. Tauris, 2026 (in English).

³ On the 2018 events in Armenia, see: Laurence Broers and Anna Ohanian (eds.), *Armenia’s Velvet Revolution, Authoritarian Decline and Civil Resistance in a Multipolar World*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2021.

⁴ Thomas Carothers, “The end of the transition paradigm”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2002, pp. 5-21.



In the first period the relevant questions are: the nature of social transformation from the rule of the Soviet-era nomenklatura and central planning to the coming to power of the Armenian intelligentsia; the transition from the Soviet system to national independence under the banner of the Karabakh struggle; and the mass privatization of the Soviet economy. How did this happen in Armenia, and with what consequences? In the second period, the two decades of stabilization and oligarchic rule, the issues to be covered include: the principles and mechanisms of the economic system put in place, and of state institutions, including the military, finances and the educational system. What were/are the specificities of Armenian capitalism, and how did it transform Armenia? How did oligarchic rule emerge and subsequently impact the functioning of institutions, leading to widespread corruption? What kind of changes did the public administration go through? And finally what role did the Karabakh conflict play in the formation of Armenia's political institutions and culture? Analysing the third period is the most challenging component of the research project, as it is still unfolding. The consequences of the Velvet Revolution need to be analysed, the impact of the military defeat and the loss of Karabakh, the influx of refugees into Armenia, as well as the elections that kept in power a Prime Minister under whose watch the war was lost.

This research project reflects the current socio-economic and political dynamics in Armenia, and will provide academic and non-partisan analysis based on in-depth research. While our previous research initiatives were grouped under the broad questions of "What went wrong and what comes next?" (with reference to the military defeat), the current initiative casts the research net much wider to include various topics since the beginning of the Karabakh Movement in 1988. The objective is to take stock of 35 years of independence based on solid academic research.



Requirements, Criteria and Conditions

ARTICLE 1.

Requirements for Eligibility

1. Proposals may be submitted individually, jointly, or by small research groups. Any support awarded shall be divided among the contributing authors.
2. Your application will only be valid after all the mandatory fields of the application form are complete and the mandatory CV(s) are uploaded.

ARTICLE 2.

Selection Criteria

The support is granted on a competitive basis. The selection committee will be composed of Diasporan Perspectives staff, a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation representative, and external experts.

Candidates are selected for support based on the quality of their proposal and their academic excellence, as demonstrated by the required submitted documentation.

Suggested topics include, but is not limited to, the following:

Part I: Armenia's Political Elites: Structures and Discourses

1. The Karabakh Committee, the intelligentsia and the nomenklatura.
2. Shifting political concepts in independent Armenia.
3. Privatization in Armenia.
4. Initial political and economic reforms under Levon Ter-Petrossyan and Vazgen Manukyan: assumptions and implementation.
5. Social base of the Kocharyan and Sargsyan administrations.
6. The ideological underpinnings of public policy and foreign policy.
7. Diaspora's role in regime consolidation.
8. What changes did the 2018 regime change bring to Armenia?
9. Comparative study of Armenia's transition/privatization/elite formation with other post-Soviet cases such as Azerbaijan/Georgia/Moldova/Ukraine/Kyrgyzstan etc.

Part II: The state and its institutions

10. State institutions after 1991 (public administration, education, banking, etc.).
11. Building an Army between 1991 to 2020 (the "sovietization" and bureaucratization of a voluntary fighting force).
12. Visions of Armenia's security: 1991-present.
13. The political system of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic: 1991-2023.
14. Institutional and elite connections between Armenia and Karabakh.



15. Why corruption? What role it played after independence and why?
16. Diaspora seen from Yerevan: What are the visions of political and/or cultural elites in Armenia towards the Diaspora?
17. Gender equality between discourse and practice.
18. Social and cultural policies of the state.
19. Political parties and trade unions.
20. The role of civil society in public life.

Part III: Infrastructure

21. Industrial collapse and rebirth? What forces are at play?
22. Traditional economic sectors and their role (mining, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing) and issues related to them.
23. Demographics: fertility rate, migration, immigration. What are the population trends, especially in comparison with neighbouring countries.
24. The housing market in Armenia.
25. Education: what happened to the education sector (universities, research centres, primary education, global performance indexes.)

Part IV: Future Trends

26. Explaining Pashinyan's electoral success. Is Armenia post-nationalist or in self-doubt? Is its democracy being consolidated or is it slipping?
27. Armenian politics after Karabakh.
28. Bridging the gap between political power and intelligentsia.
29. The IT sector and the transformation of the economy: what impact on Armenia's development.
30. Newly emerging regional economic infrastructure and connections (TRIPP, etc.).
31. The impact of opening of borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan.
32. Geopolitical changes and diplomacy.
33. Military reforms since 2023: progress and obstacles.
34. The impact of the climate crisis on Armenia, and mechanisms to cope with it.

ARTICLE 3.

Conditions for Maintaining the Support

The support may be terminated for any breach of the terms of the agreement to be signed by both parties. In this case, the candidate shall reimburse the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation the amount received.



ARTICLE 4.

Application Documents and Information

1. A CV, or, where the application is submitted jointly, the CVs of all applicants.

Additional information must be provided directly in the online application form. Please do **not** upload separate documents:

2. An abstract of no more than 300 words.
3. A list of publications.

ARTICLE 5.

Application

Applications must be submitted online. The application process will open on the 13 October 2026 and the deadline for applications is 31 December 2026 (23h59, Lisbon time).

We strongly advise candidates not to wait until the last few days before applying.

Key dates

1. Deadline for abstracts: **31 December 2026.**
2. Decision will be communicated to applicants by 15 March 2027.
3. First draft papers to be submitted by **31 August 2027.**
4. Workshop (in person and/or online) to discuss draft papers in October 2027.
5. Papers to be peer reviewed before being finalized and accepted for publication.
6. Accepted papers will be submitted to a publisher in 2028.
7. Authors whose papers are accepted will receive a research grant of 2.000 EUR. Joint proposals (or by small research groups) are accepted, in which case the grant shall be divided among the authors.

Accepted draft papers will be discussed during a workshop to be held in Yerevan in the autumn of 2027. The finalized papers will be published either in an academic format (edited book volume(s)) and/or as policy papers.

Data Protection (this section is included as per European legal requirements)

All personal data provided in the application process or during the execution of the scholarship shall be processed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as the data controller, for the purposes of managing and execution the scholarship process based on the acceptance of the data subject of the terms and conditions of the scholarship (pre-contractual diligence and subsequent contractual execution).



The personal data shall be kept for the period of time necessary for the management and grant of the support, except in cases where another period is required by applicable law. Some data (i.e., the name of the data subject, date of application, terms and duration of the scholarship and personal data potentially included in the works and final publications) will be kept indefinitely by the Foundation for the purpose of archiving relevant information in the context of its cultural activity.

The data subject may exercise the right of access, rectification, erasure, opposition, limitation and portability, according to the applicable legislation, through email directed to privacidade@gulbenkian.pt

The Foundation implements all security measures necessary and adequate for the protection of the personal data of the subjects, either when the data is processed directly by them or when the data is processed by entities subcontracted by it.

The Foundation may process the data directly and/or through processors for the purpose of managing the scholarship. In such cases, appropriate contracts shall be entered into with such processors, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

For the purposes of disseminating the activity of the Foundation, based on its legitimate interest in promoting its initiatives, the Foundation may communicate the data of the subject to partner entities for publications and institutional communications. These entities may be located within the territory of the European Union or abroad, and in the latter case, appropriate mechanisms under the applicable legislation to safeguard the security of personal data processed shall be used at all times.

Data subjects may file a complaint to the Portuguese National Authority (“Comissão Nacional de Proteção de Dados”) if they believe that there is a breach of data protection incurred by the Foundation.

For more information visit our [website](#)

To be able to process applications for scholarships and support, the Foundation will necessarily process the personal data requested from Users at the time of application, as well as during the monitoring, by the Foundation, of a scholarship or support granted by it. Collection of this data is necessary for the Foundation to be able to review your application and award the scholarship or support. The Foundation processes this data for purposes of pre-contractual diligence and subsequent contractual execution. For the purposes of submitting the application, it will be necessary to create an account as described in the preceding point.

Information and contacts

Questions should be submitted to the following email address:

info@diasporanperspectives.org.

October 2026