



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES

(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

5th European Regional Meeting **on the implementation and effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention**

4-8 December 2004, Yerevan, Armenia

Practical Information

▪ Travel to Armenia

Different companies operate flights to Armenia's capital Yerevan. From Moscow, several daily flights exist to Yerevan Zvartnots international airport. From Athens, London, Paris, Prague, Vienna and other European cities, flights operate on specific days of the week only. Please contact your travel agent for detailed flight information, or visit www.amadeus.net. The time in Armenia is GMT+4h, i.e. four hours ahead of London time, or three hours ahead of Central European Time.

The organisers will welcome delegates at Yerevan Zvartnots airport. Please, send your travel details on the Booking Form to the two addresses indicated, in order that the organisers can arrange transport to the hotel.

▪ Passport and Visas

Most European passport holders need a visa to enter Armenia, the only exceptions being citizen of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine. The Armenian Consulate in charge of your country is in a position to give you official information on how to obtain your visa. Please, contact them in time.

▪ Accommodation and Meeting Venue

Provisional room bookings have been made at the Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan where the Meeting will take place. This hotel is conveniently situated in the city centre on Republic Square and provides all facilities needed for the Meeting and your comfortable stay (www.marriott.com). The hotel reception phone is: +374 (0)1 599 000 and the fax: +374 (0)1 599 001.

The organisers have negotiated a special room rate equivalent to 95 USD for single rooms, including light breakfast and all taxes, or equivalent to 115 USD for twin rooms. Hopefully, final prices will be somewhat lower, depending on the number of firm bookings. Please indicate your choice in the Booking Form. The organisers will book your room and deposit the required advance payment. At the end of your stay, you will pay the full costs of your room, and possible additional services, directly to the hotel (credit cards accepted).

▪ **Armenia and its capital Yerevan**

Acknowledged as one of the cradles of civilization – **Armenia** is a country with a long history. Numerous monuments and masterpieces of ancient times and the Middle Ages can be found throughout the country. The monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin enjoy the status of World Heritage Sites. Tourism in Armenia is rooted in the country's historical landmarks and natural attractions such as Lake Sevan, the hot springs of Arzni and Jermuk, the forests of Dilijan, Aghveran, Tsaghkadzor, Bjurakan and Gugark, or the mountain caves and cliffs in the southeastern region. Mount Ararat, topping at 5165m, located in nearby Turkey, is a national symbol of Armenia and is visible from much of the southwestern region.

A number of websites provide useful further information; here are a few:

- **www.armeniaemb.org** - providing text and pictures about Yerevan's monuments and other places, including practical information on climate, travelling etc.
- **www.tacentral.com** - providing practical information including a currency converter
- **www.tourismarmenia.net** - providing text information with an extended historical part
- **www.armeniainfo.am** - providing slide shows and an interactive country map

The capital city **Yerevan**, nestled in the shadow of the snow-capped heights of Mount Ararat, where the Biblical Noah's Ark landed escaping the Great Flood, is the main tourist gateway. You can gain further insights into Armenian cultural achievements at museums, theaters and concert halls. Theater in Armenia has a tradition dating back more than 2,000 years. You can attend a wide choice of performances ranging from concerts to puppet theater and jazz music.

At the top of Mesrop Mashtots Avenue, the main artery of Yerevan, you will find the Matenadaran - the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, boasting the world's largest collection of ancient manuscripts (over 16,000). The collection includes many valuable works of foreign philosophers, some of which have survived only in their Armenian translation. Among these are works by Aristotle, Eusebius of Caesarea and many others. Art lovers can visit the National Art Gallery displaying its rich collections of works by European and Russian artists. This impressive building located in the Republic Square is also home to the largest national collection of paintings by famous Armenian artists such as Aivazovsky and Sarian. The spirit of creativity is fostered and promoted in Armenians from the young age. Hence, the Children's Picture Gallery, which was the first permanent exhibition of its sort in the world.

Armenian Craft Museum: *64 Abovyan street*, unique examples of silver jewelry, woodwork, carpets, earthenware and embossed goods

Children's Museum: *13 Abovyan street*, the world's first Children's Picture Gallery has developed over the years into a centre for developing an aesthetic sense in the rising generation, several individual exhibitions of works by children aged from 3 to 16, all works exhibited remain the property of the Gallery which now has a collection of over 100,000 drawings

Contemporary Art Museum: *7 Mashtots street*, exhibitions of paintings, drawings and sculptures by Armenian and foreign artists

Erebuni Fortress Museum: *38 Erebuni avenue*, a substantial museum at the foot of Arin Berd hill, the citadel was funded by Argishti I, son of Menua, King of Urartu, in the year 783

Genocide Memorial and Museum: *Tsitsernakaberd park*, a testimony to the destruction of Armenian communities in eastern Anatolia during the First World War, with a splendid view over the Ararat valley

Geological Museum: *10 Abovyan street*, houses a display of various building materials, tufas, pumice-stones, slags, basalts, granites and marbles of the most varied shades, metals and minerals of which the Republic abounds, fossilized fauna and flora

National Art Gallery: *Hanrapetutian (Republic) square*, huge collection of Russian, Armenian and European artworks

National History Museum: *Hanrapetutian (Republic) square*, important archaeological collection from Stone Age through Medieval, models of early modern Yerevan and other historical exhibits

Matenadaran Manuscript Museum: *53 Mashtots street*, the grey basalt mass at the top of Mashtots boulevard is world renowned as the eternal repository of Armenia's Medieval written culture

Parajanov Museum, *15/16 Dzoragyugh street*, final home of famed Soviet film maker Sergei Parajanov (1924-1990), his visual imagination and subversive humor is represented in a series of compositions of unusual objects

Saryan Museum: *3 Saryan street*, Martiros Saryan is famous for his landscapes in which he celebrates the beauty of his land, he also painted a fair number of portraits, remarkable for their psychological depth and philosophical approach, Saryan was also productive as a book illustrator and stage designer

Guided tour through central Yerevan

The organizers propose a guided tour on foot through central Yerevan on Saturday morning, 4 December. Meeting point is in front of the Marriott Hotel, Republic Square, at 09h00. You will have enough time to discover historical buildings and monuments and lively street markets, including the famous "Vernissage" crafts market, before returning to the hotel to register for the Meeting. Please indicate in the Booking Form if you wish to participate.

▪ Registration and Information Desk

A registration desk will be open from Saturday 4 December at 11h00 onwards at the entrance of the Meeting hall in the Marriott Hotel on Republic Square. Please come early to avoid queuing to register for the Meeting.

▪ MEETING DOCUMENTS

The Meeting language is English. Important information and all documents related to the Meeting are progressively added to our specific Meeting website, as they become available, including the final programme, texts of presentations and detailed excursion programmes. The Meeting website will be updated regularly. Please, visit it repeatedly before the meeting and download those documents that you would like to bring with you to Yerevan:

www.ramsar.org/mtg_reg_europe2004_index.htm

The organisers regret that it will not be possible to distribute documents on the spot.

▪ Lunches and Meals

Lunches and evening meals can be taken individually in many different restaurants and snack bars, either in the Marriott Hotel or in its immediate surroundings, within easy walking distance.

▪ Posters and Exhibitions

Please confirm your intention to exhibit a poster on the Booking Form in order that the necessary support panel can be prepared. You are requested to install your poster during Saturday morning, 4 December, between 10h and 14h, and to take it down on Wednesday, 8 December, after the closing of the meeting.

- **Currency**

The official currency, the Armenian dram (AMD), can be bought at many exchange offices throughout central Yerevan. Buying rates are roughly 630 AMD/EUR, 520 AMD/USD, 950 AMD/GBP, 410 AMD/CHF, 17 AMD/RUR. Up-to-date exchange rates and a currency converter can be found on www.tacentral.com.

- **Climate and Clothing**

Average temperatures in early December in Yerevan are likely to oscillate around 2-6°C with low temperatures during night possibly below freezing and maxima during the day up to 10°C and possibly even more. Rain or snowfall during these days should be expected with a possibility of roughly 25%. While the hotel and its Meeting halls are centrally heated, please bring adequate winter clothing for your walks outside in Yerevan city, and especially for the excursion on 6 December to lake Sevan, situated at 1900m above sea level, where cold temperatures and strong winds may prevail.

- **Transport**

Public transport means in Yerevan are buses, mini-buses, subway and taxis. Tickets for a bus or subway journey cost 50 drams and can be obtained from the bus driver or at subway stations. Taxi cost about 100 dram per kilometre and can be ordered through a number of taxi-by-phone services.

- **Electricity**

Continental European, two round hole plugs for 220 volts/50 hertz are used. Internet and e-mail connections are possible in the Marriott Hotel and in many cyber cafes downtown.

- **Insurance**

Please make sure that you have adequate individual health, accident and travel risk insurance cover, as this cannot be covered by the organisers.

- **Shops**

Shopping is easy in the centre of Yerevan where most sales persons understand English. Credit cards are accepted only in a few shops, however. Many of the shops have long opening hours seven days a week. If you are looking for specific Armenian souvenirs, try typical handicrafts (gems, silver, wood carvings, rugs, etc.) that can also be found on specific street markets; or taste one of the famous Armenian brandies.

- **Excursions**

6 December: excursion offered to all participants

A one-day excursion to **lake Sevan**, one of Armenia's two existing Ramsar Sites, is offered to all participants on Monday, 6 December. You will receive a detailed programme and background information on this very unique site when registering at the reception desk.

We will travel to lake Sevan by coach. During the excursion, we will visit and obtain information on Sevan National Park and its management scheme, different wetland types along the shores of lake Sevan, water management and hydro-electricity production, and the 9th century Armenian churches remaining on the lake shores.

9 and 10 December: optional excursions

Two optional excursions are organised after the Meeting in the form of day trips from Yerevan to several places of interest. The approximate costs for transport, entrance fees, guide and lunch will be about 30 EUR per day, depending on the number of participants (to be paid on arrival when registering for the Meeting).

During the two day trips you will visit the wetlands in the fertile Ararat valley southeast of Yerevan as well as in the north-western part of Armenia. On both days, important historical monuments, churches and places of cultural interest will also be visited. The exact itinerary will depend somewhat on the weather (road conditions). Detailed programmes will be provided on arrival when registering at the reception desk. However, in order to reserve your seat, please indicate your wish to participate in either or both of these optional excursions already now in the Booking Form.

▪ Further questions and help

The organisers of the Meeting are happy to provide you with additional advice and remain alert for last minute help. Should you have further questions that have not been adequately covered under the points above, please contact Mr Karen Jenderedjian at: jender@arminco.com, phone in Yerevan: +374 (0)1 56 80 27, or mobile phone: +374 (0)9 43 19 69.

We are looking forward to meet you in Yerevan.

Orientation Union, Yerevan & Ramsar Secretariat