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Armenia weighs an EEU court challenge to Russian import restrictions

Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan said Yerevan will appeal if the Eurasian Economic Commission does not lift curbs on brandy, wine, produce, dairy exports

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Armenia is keeping open the option of taking its trade dispute with Russia to the court of the Eurasian Economic Union if the bloc's executive body does not back Yerevan, Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan said on Wednesday, November 18, as the government tries to reverse Russian restrictions that have hit a wide range of Armenian exports.

Speaking to reporters in parliament, Papoyan said Armenia could appeal to the EEU Court if the Eurasian Economic Commission, the union's regulatory body, fails to rule in Armenia's favor. At the same time, he made clear that Yerevan does not want to force a formal debate before it believes it can secure support for its position.

Papoyan said the government was working to produce a positive outcome soon. His comments suggested that Armenia is still trying to settle the issue through the bloc's internal procedures before escalating the dispute to its judicial arm.

The dispute centers on Russian import restrictions that began in late April and expanded to cover some of Armenia's most important export categories. Russian regulators have cited sanitary and labeling violations in targeting Armenian goods, according to Armenian officials and previous public statements from Moscow. The measures have affected mineral water, brandy, wine, cut flowers, fruits, vegetables, fish, dairy products and other items.

For Armenia's beverage producers, the pressure is especially important because Russia has long been a major market for Armenian brandy, wine and bottled drinks. Any prolonged disruption could hurt sales and expose the risk of relying heavily on one large export destination at a time when political tensions are affecting trade.

The Eurasian Economic Commission had originally been expected to discuss Armenia's complaint on November 3. That session was postponed for a week at Armenia's request. Another meeting scheduled for November 10 also did not take place, and Armenia's Economy Ministry did not publicly explain that delay.

Papoyan's remarks came against the backdrop of a wider political strain between Armenia and Russia, driven in part by Yerevan's deepening ties with the European Union. In March 2025, Armenia's parliament passed a law launching the country's EU

accession process, a move that sharpened questions about how Armenia plans to balance its European ambitions with its membership in the Moscow-led EEU.

Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, have repeatedly argued that EU membership is incompatible with staying in the EEU, whose members also include Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Moscow has urged Armenia to let voters decide between the two blocs in a referendum.

Papoyan pushed back on the idea that Armenia is trying to replace one market with another. He said his goal as economy minister is to expand Armenian exports both to the EU and to the EEU. He also said Armenian exports to the EU have increased strongly in 2026, while shipments of some goods to the EEU have declined.

The European Union has recently given Armenia temporary duty-free access for most Armenian exports, including agricultural products, a step that could help cushion some of the losses caused by Russian restrictions. Even so, replacing Russian demand would be difficult in the short term for sectors that have built brands, logistics and distribution channels around that market, particularly alcoholic beverages and other consumer goods.

Papoyan said he remained optimistic that Armenia would increase exports in multiple directions in 2027 and recover earlier trade volumes with the Russia-led bloc. His comments signaled that Yerevan still hopes the dispute can be managed without a broader break inside the EEU.

The minister also addressed questions about a canceled working trip to Moscow that had been scheduled for November 18 and November 19. On Tuesday, November 17, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian’s office published a formal decision on the government’s e-gov.am portal sending Papoyan to the Russian capital for EEU consultations on trade policy and industrial priorities. The decree said he was to report back within three days of returning to Yerevan.

Papoyan said he stayed in Armenia because the planned ministerial consultations lost their purpose after two of his counterparts withdrew at the last minute. He said EEU economy ministers had been expected to discuss customs tariffs and trade regulations,

but Armenia then decided not to take part at the ministerial level. A deputy minister attended instead, he said.

The trade dispute has also unfolded alongside Russian warnings on energy. Russian officials have said that if Armenia continues moving toward EU integration, it could lose preferential energy arrangements and be forced to buy Russian natural gas at market prices rather than at the discounted rate it now receives. That has added another layer of pressure to a relationship already strained by disagreements over security, regional politics and economic alignment.

For now, Armenia appears to be trying to avoid a direct institutional clash while preserving all available options. Papoyan’s remarks showed that Yerevan is still looking for a negotiated or administrative solution inside the EEU, but is prepared to take the matter further if Russian restrictions on Armenian goods remain in place.