



## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***Public Discussion with CSOs of Shirak Region on the “Draft of the Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2014 – 2018”***

On 22 October 2014, a Public Discussion with CSOs of Shirak region on the “Draft of the Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2014 – 2018” It was organized by the “Armenian Young Lawyers Association” NGO in the framework of the EU funded project “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” took place in Gyumri.

The International Aid/Cooperation Officer of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia Mr. Alessandro Zanotta marked the importance of such public discussions and informed on his interest in this issue.

During the discussions, “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” Project Manager Mr. Karen Zadoyan said that this document should pass through public discussions. “If as a result of these discussions it becomes possible to influence and change it through Civil Society, then we can state that the civil society in Armenia has certain leverage in the country, otherwise we can come to 2 conclusions: firstly that we don’t yet have serious leverages to influence the government project, and second – that public discussions might have an imitation character, the government won’t accept any of the suggestions and will just show that the document passed through public discussions with the civil society”, underlined Mr Zadoyan.

Secretary of the Working Group on the Anti-Corruption Strategy Mariam Galstyan stated that 4 target sectors have been selected in the framework of the RA Draft Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2014-2018: healthcare, education, taxing and policing. “Specifically in these 4 sectors activities should be undertaken, and if we achieve serious results here, then we’ll go forward and include other sectors as well”, said the Government representative.

Participants of today’s discussion also watched a short video on a dispute between a citizen and RA Medical and Social Examination Agency, which was solved in favor of the citizen. Participants underlined the inclusion of the social sector in the program, it was suggested to envisage the involvement of CSOs as institutions implementing the monitoring of the Strategy by providing respective financial means by the Government.

All the suggestions presented by the representatives of CSOs and Media during Public Discussion will be summarized and presented to the Ministry of Justice.

The project aims at increasing the role of CSOs in promoting anti-corruption reforms and their implementation. In the framework of the project the capacity of CSOs and the media to engage in monitoring and watchdog activities will be built. Anti-corruption training workshops will be organized throughout Armenia with the purpose of enabling CSOs and media organisations to better comprehend the issues related to anti-corruption and freedom of information. These activities aim at deepening the existing opportunities for carrying out anti-corruption activities. Small grants will be given for raising the effectiveness of public monitoring and implementation of appropriate monitoring, watchdog and investigative activities. A sustainable dialogue between CSOs and the Government will be developed with the participation of CSOs, to strengthen the anti-corruption institutional mechanisms.

The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the “Armenian Young Lawyers Association” NGO in partnership with the “Freedom of Information Center” NGO. The project duration is 3 years (January 2014 – December 2016) and the budget is 650.000 EUR.

**Armenian Young Lawyers Association** (AYLA) was established in 1995 with a Mission to promote to the establishment of the rule of law, democracy and formation of the civil society in Armenia, where the people are aware of their rights and their rights are protected.

**Freedom of Information Center** (FOI) operates over 10 years. The Mission of FOI is to promote application of the RA Freedom of Information Law, contribute to the transparency and openness of the Armenian government system and to stimulate civic society's involvement in the governance system.

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The European Commission is the EU’s executive body.

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