



PRESS RELEASE

29 October 2014, Yerevan

Discussion of the “Draft of the Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2014 – 2018” in Syunik Region

On 29 October 2014 a Public Discussion with CSOs of Syunik region on the “Draft of the Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2014 – 2018” took place in Kapan. It was organized by the “Armenian Young Lawyers Association” NGO in the framework of the EU funded project “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion”.

Welcome speeches were delivered by the Executive Director of the Armenian Young Lawyers Association NGO and Project coordinator/Grants manager of the “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project Artak Saribekyan and Regional Coordinator of the Program Ani Asatryan. The “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project’s national expert Marat Atovmyan and international expert Carl Ulbricht presented the draft anti-corruption strategy, and then spoke about the possibilities of establishing an independent multi-functional anti-corruption body and criminalizing the illicit enrichment in Armenia. After the presentations active discussions revolved, those present came up with suggestions and expressed their opinions.

“Kapan Civil Movement” organization representative Davit Hakobyan thinks that the anti-corruption strategy policy of the last years has been very inefficient and if any changes have been registered, then only to the worse. He thinks that the underlying reason for this is the incomplete work of not only the government institutions, but also the NGOs, and to establish real changes there should be a political will of the governing authorities and only then the role and importance of the NGOs will become obvious.

Representative of the NGO “Against the violation of law” Hrayr Khachatryan raised the issue on why the draft strategy did not explicitly mention the criteria of targeting the 4 concrete spheres, and then suggested to establish independent anti-corruption bodies, each of which would be responsible for a concrete aspect as this was the only way for effective struggle against corruption.

“Regional Association of Kapan Women” NGO representative Susanna Martirosyan stated that the people’s mentality should firstly change, and that the legal awareness of the society is low. Mrs. Martirosyan thinks that to achieve changes they should start from the children, from schools, and it can be implemented through introducing anti-corruption courses in the educational programs. The “Syunik schoolchildren” NGO representative Arthur Hakobyan joined to the suggestion.

And “Keni” NGO representative Garegin Gabrielyan came up with his opinion on the illicit enrichment criminalization. He firstly wanted to know the extent which would be considered as an illicit enrichment, and then said that the problem wouldn’t be solved only through criminalization and concrete methods would be needed for the law to be enacted.

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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