



## PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

### *“Corruption Risks in the Field of Licences and Permissions” Anti-Corruption Event*

On 19 October, 2016 the Armenian Lawyers’ Association and the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia, in partnership with the Freedom of Information Centre, organised in the city of Ararat an anti-corruption event entitled “Corruption Risks in the Field of Licences and Permissions”. The event was aimed at revealing the corruption risks in this field and outlining respective solutions.

The event was organised in the scope of the “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project funded by the EU and co-funded by the OSCE Office in Yerevan. Representatives from civil society organisations, mass media, the Armenian Lawyers’ Association, including the experts of the “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project, and businessmen attended the event.

Mr. Artak Saribekyan, the Executive Director of the Armenian Lawyers’ Association will give opening remarks at the event. He highlighted the importance of eliminating corruption risks in the sector and presented the work that had already been done in the field of anti-corruption. Mr. Hakob Avagyan, the President of the SME Cooperation Association, which is a member of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia, noted that certain corruption risks are spotted in the provision of construction licences. A company could receive only one type of license before. Now, different types of licenses are required for different fields of construction (each costing AMD 80,000). He added that a list of documents is required for each licence. However, those lists are not clearly defined by law. In addition, the law on advertisements has gaps as a result of which businessmen are forced to pay additional duties.

Ms. Armine Chakhalyan, the Legal Adviser of the Armenian Lawyers’ Association, spoke about cooperation with CSOs towards implementing anti-corruption reforms in the field of licenses and permissions. She highlighted the importance of participation, oversight, monitoring, elaboration of shadow reports, as well as national public awareness campaigns.

Mr. Carl Ulbricht, the International Expert of the “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project, gave a presentation on the international experience of anti-corruption work in the field of licences and permissions. As a glaring example of corruption, he spoke about India where 71% of drivers have received driver’s license without having passed the examination, as it is defined by law, and 61% could not even drive. As means of tackling the problems in this field he suggests ensuring transparency, introducing mechanisms of running the processes faster, elaboration and implementation of a realistic pricing policy for issuing licenses.

The recommendations, after being summarised in the event report, will be sent for consideration to the RA Government and other relevant bodies, which will lead to the implementation of reforms in the field of licences and permissions.

The main goal of the “**Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion**” project is to increase the role of the Civil Society Organisations (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 has been enhanced. Thus, 100 CSOs and media organisations have strengthened their understanding of corruption issues and freedom of information as well as their ability to monitor and engage in watchdog activities. Small sub-grants have been allocated to 15 CSOs and media organisations for raising the effectiveness of public monitoring and the implementation of appropriate monitoring, watchdog and investigative activities. In 2014 the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia was established in the scope of the project. The Coalition now comprises more than 80 CSOs and media organisations and plays a key role in the sustainable CSO-Government dialogue developed in the scope of the project. The joint work of the Government and the Coalition on the issues of the criminalisation of illicit enrichment and the establishment of an independent anti-corruption agency in Armenia has been a particularly remarkable achievement in the scope of the project.

The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the OSCE Office in Yerevan. It is implemented by the “Armenian Lawyers’ Association” NGO – Applicant and “Freedom of Information Center” NGO – Partner. The project duration is 3 years (January 2014 – December 2016) and the budget is 650,000 EUR, of which 585,000 EUR was contributed by the EU and 31,117 EUR was contributed by the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

**Armenian Lawyers’ Association** (ALA) 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 where their rights are protected. Before February 2016, ALA was called Armenian Young Lawyers Association.

**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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The Project is co-funded by the OSCE Office in Yerevan.  
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The OSCE Office in Yerevan has been operating since 1999, and its mission is to support Armenia in developing its democratic institutions and strengthening civil society, acting in the areas of legislative reform; combating corruption and trafficking; environmental activities; raising awareness for human rights; media freedom; gender equality, etc.



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