



PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

Golden Key and Rusty Lock Award Ceremony

On 28 September, 2016, the Freedom of Information Centre for the 14th time announced the recipients of the Golden Key and Rusty Lock awards. The award ceremony was devoted to the International Right to Know Day and the 15th Anniversary of the FOICA. Mr. Davit Harutyunyan, the Minister-Chief of Staff of the RA Government, greeted the guests and stressed the importance of transparency and openness in the government system of Armenia.

The Acting Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia Mr. Dirk Lorenz mentioned in his welcoming speech: “Freedom to seek, receive and impart information is a key component of democratic governance and development. People need to be fully informed to be able to form an opinion and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Freedom of information also contributes to better governance as it enhances transparency in public affairs and can be used as a tool to make governments accountable for their actions, in particular when access to information results in the exposure of human rights violations or corruption practices”. Ms. Liana Doydoyan, the host of the event and the President of the Freedom of Information Centre of Armenia, welcomed the guests and announced the winners. The independent jury awarded the following institutions with Golden Keys, as a symbol of openness and transparency:

- The positive award for the public institution that best applied the RA Freedom of Information Law was presented to the RA Ministry of Health. The Golden Key was awarded to Deputy Minister of Health Mr. Sergey Khachatryan by Acting Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia Mr. Dirk Lorentz.
- The award for the institution which has best implemented the Open Government Partnership Commitments was awarded to Mr. Davit Harutyunyan, the Minister-Chief of Staff of the RA Government. The Golden Key was awarded by Ms. Deborah Grieser, the USAID/Armenia Mission Director.
- The web site of the Vayots Dzor Regional Administration was recognised the best official web site in terms of access to information. The Golden Key to Deputy Governor of Vayots Dzor Mels Harutyunyan was awarded by Judith Farnworth, the UK's Ambassador to Armenia.
- Award for the NGO, which has contributed to the exercising of the right of access to information, was presented to the “Protection of Rights without Borders” NGO. The Golden Key was awarded by Mr. Suren Krmoyan, a Deputy Minister of Justice, to Ms. Haykuhi Harutyunyan, the President of the “Protection of Rights without Borders” NGO.
- The award for the journalist for using the FOI Law most actively was awarded to Mr. Arman Suleymanyan, a CivilNet journalist. He was awarded by Ms. Loreta Vioiu, the Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Armenia.
- The award for the outlet that covered FOI issues most actively was presented to the “Asparez” daily newspaper.
- A Special Award was handed to Mr. Artsrun Hovhannisyan, the Spokesman of the Ministry of Defence. The Golden Key was awarded by Ms. Liana Doydoyan, the President of FOICA.

The selection criteria for the most open and secret agencies can be found at <http://www.foi.am/en/award-standards>. The results for the previous years are available at <http://www.foi.am/en/awards-winners/>. The Award Ceremony was organised by the “Freedom of Information Centre of Armenia” NGO in cooperation with the Armenian Lawyers’ Association and in the scope of the “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” Project funded by the European Union.

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 20 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.

The **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.

The **Freedom of Information Centre** (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.

For more information please contact Deputy Project Manager Ms. Liana Doydoyan on business days from 9:00 to 18:00. Tel.: 560360; URL: <http://www.foi.am>; e-mail: foi@foi.am.



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The European Commission is the EU's executive body. “The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.



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