



## PRESS RELEASE

23 November, 2016

Yerevan

### *Youth-Business-Government Anti-Corruption Working Meeting*

On 18-20 November, 2016, the Armenian Lawyers' Association, in cooperation with the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia, the Freedom of Information Centre and "The Future Is Yours" Non-Governmental Organisation, organised a **Youth-Business-Government Anti-Corruption Working Meeting**. The working meeting was organised along the same lines of the "Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion" Project funded by the European Union and co-funded by the OSCE Office in Yerevan. This specific event was supported by the latter. Representatives of state bodies, international organisations, business organisations and associations, civil society organisations and youth participated in the meeting.

Karen Zadoyan, the President of the Armenian Lawyers' Association (ALA) and the Coordinator of the Secretariat of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition informed the participants that the Government currently works in a number of directions originally jointly mapped out with ALA (e.g., on 18 November the Government adopted the legislative bill on criminalisation of illicit enrichment). Naira Gyulnazaryan, the Coordinator of Anti-Corruption Projects at the OSCE Office in Yerevan, highlighted, "A lot has been said about our youth being our future. I am sure though that they are our present". Deputy Minister of Justice Suren Krmoyan urged the youngsters against getting involved in corruption. Karen Azaryan, a Trade Officer at the Delegation of the European Union in Armenia, stressed, "The country that is clean of corruption is a prosperous, developing country. In order to solve a problem, one first of all should accept its existence. Now the Government admits that there's a problem and shows readiness to solve it. At this moment, the door of opportunity is open and you should be active".

Gevorg Saghoyan, the Head of the Customs Control Department of the State Revenue Committee, attached importance to such meetings, noting that the previous ones organised by ALA had revealed problems that had been invisible for the agency before. Arin Avanosyan, a 11th grader at the Heratsi High School, suggested that administrative and high-level corruption should be prevented at the same time, e.g., through expansion of such projects. Gor Meliksetyan, another high schooler, recommended that everyone start from themselves.

The sections pertaining to fight against corruption and business as envisaged in the RA Government's programme adopted on 21 October, 2016, the anti-corruption activities carried out in the business sector by the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia in the Government-CSO-Business format, the recommendation package (in the tax and customs sectors, public procurement sector, fields of free competition and monopolies, licences and permissions), as well as the "Young Citizens Take Action" Programme and the recommendation package addressing the problems in the RA tax and customs sectors as elaborated in the frame of the Programme, were presented at the three-day working meeting. On the third day, the participants were divided into three working groups. Each of these groups revealed the corruption risks in the tax and customs sectors, as well as in the field of free economic competition and monopolies, and prepared anti-corruption recommendations. The main problem stated by all the three groups was the low level of public awareness. At the end of the working meeting, the participants shared their final thoughts on the seminar. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

As a result of the meeting, the existing recommendations will be updated with the new ones and sent for consideration to the RA Government and other relevant agencies, according to each sector discussed. This will contribute to the implementation of efficient reforms in the mentioned sectors.

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.

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) has been operating for 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 PR Coordinator Mrs. Narine Karapetyan on business days from 9:00 to 18:00. Tel.: 540199; Fax: 580299; URL: [www.armla.am](http://www.armla.am).**



The Project is funded by the European Union.

Delegation of the European Union to Armenia  
Tel.: +37410 54 64 94  
Fax: +37410 54 64 95

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".



The Project is co-funded by the OSCE Office in Yerevan.  
Tel.: +374 10 229610  
Fax: +374 10 229615

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.



Armenian Lawyers' Association  
Address: 7 Nalbandyan Str., Suite 2, Yerevan, Armenian, 0010  
Tel.: +37410 54 01 99  
Fax: +37410 58 02 99



Freedom of Information Center  
Address: 1/3 Buzand Str., Yerevan 0010, Armenia  
Tel.: +37410 56 03 60  
Fax: +37410 56 03 60