



PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

The CCD project learns about the international experience of CSO capacity building

The experience of the Czech Republic and Slovakia on capacity building of CSOs and establishing constructive dialogue with the state was presented to 15 CSO representatives in the framework of the EU-funded “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” Project.

Pavel Mička, a co-founder of the “Agora Central Europe” NGO, and Slovak expert Peter Gušťafík were in Yerevan to conduct a three-day training on October 9-11.

“Today, civil society organisations are the best democracy schools in the world. They are traditionally understood as schools where people learn how to engage more in public affairs,” Pavel Mička said.

Slovak expert Peter Gušťafík presented the confidence-building efforts between the authorities and the civil society. In his words, trust is the basis of cooperation.

“It is really important to understand the meaning of the word “trust”. For example, if they rob me, I will go to the police because I trust. If there is lack of confidence in the state system, there can be no talk of democracy,” Silvia de Benito, an ALA volunteer from Spain, said.

“As a result of lack of confidence, people often do not participate in the development of public policies,” Haykuhi Alaverdyan, one of the participants of the training, noted, adding, *“Citizens do not even think of advancing their own ideas, moreover, they don’t believe that they will be taken into account and that their struggle will lead to victory.”*

The international experts noted in their speech that no matter how instructive the international experience is, Armenia should find its way to success on its own.

After the three-day training, on October 12 and 13, Pavel Mička, a co-founder of the “Agora Central Europe” NGO, had meetings with senior officials from the Ministries of Justice, Territorial Administration and Development, Education and Science, as well as the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments, within the framework of the “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” project.

Representatives of the state structures emphasised the importance of the implementation of the project and reaffirmed their readiness to provide support for its successful implementation.

The **“Commitment to Constructive Dialogue”** project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union by a Consortium of civil society organisations, which are the Armenian Lawyers’ Association (lead organisation), Agora Central Europe (NGO based in the Czech Republic), the Armenian Centre for Democratic Education-CIVITAS, the International Centre for Human Development, the SME Cooperation Association and the Union of Communities of Armenia. The project aims to enhance the influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) and CSO coalitions/networks on public policies in Armenia. This will allow organisations that are already working in sectoral coalitions to access additional resources, new groups of civil society experts to come together and encourage place their causes on the local and national policy agenda, to identify common concerns and priorities and approach government bodies with constructive and strategic policy engagement initiatives. The project will provide sub-grants to CSOs and CSO coalitions for developing public policies and bringing significant changes in the 9 target sectors selected within the project, including those of justice, education and business.

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 used to be called Armenian Young Lawyers Association.

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