



PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

Czech and Polish Experience in the Field of NGO-Government Cooperation

During a training organised on October 23-27 in Aghveran, the experience of the Czech Republic and Poland in the sphere of cooperation of the non-profit and non-governmental organisations with the government was presented.

The 5-day training organised within the framework of the EU-funded “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” (CCD) project was intended for the representatives of the implementing organisations.

“In Armenia, the level of public awareness is very low, and citizens do not know what public organisations do. Problems related to NGOs in Armenia and the Czech Republic are very similar,” Ivan Bursikova, President of the Czech “Agora Central Europe” Organization said.

Monika Chrzczonowicz, a representative of the Polish Capital Centre for NGO Support, highlighted the role of incubators during the presentation of NGO capacity building tools.

“The Capital Centre for NGO Support is located in Warsaw. The objective is to create a platform for the cooperation of NGOs. The Assistance Centre provides legal advice and space for organisations. Such organisations are created to provide assistance to other organisations on various issues,” Monika Chrzczonowicz said.

Syuzanna Soghomonyan, the coordinator of the CSO-Government Dialogue of the “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” project, also highlighted the role of incubators. *“For me, it was especially important to learn about the steps aimed at the creation of the mechanisms of CSO Incubators and the practical steps for their effective functioning. It is also necessary to highlight the international experience provided by the experts within the framework of the training, especially those related to the problems existing in the field and the examples of their solution,”* she said.

During these 5 days, the participants discussed the activities, needs and general issues of non-governmental organisations, gaining sound knowledge necessary for the future implementation of the CCD project.

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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