



PRESS RELEASE

15 March 2018

Yerevan

Conflicting Provisions in the New Draft Law on the Introduction of the Volunteering Institution: Organisations Recommend Reviewing the Draft

On 15 March, during the training organised in the scope of the EU-funded “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” project, representatives of more than 12 civil society organisations (CSOs) learned about the current and planned legal regulations related to the volunteering institution.

Mr. Marat Atovmyan, the Mentors’ Group Coordinator/Justice and Related Sectors Mentor of the “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” Project, presented the provisions regulating the activities of volunteers in Armenia, as well as the legal regulations aimed at the introduction of the volunteering institution provided by the new draft law.

Ms Lusine Manukyan, the Vice President of the “Association of Young Journalists” NGO, who participated in the training, said in a conversation with us: *“There were provisions that could be taken and applied immediately in our activities. There were also provisions in the draft law that we were really concerned with. The first provision that we were worried about was that the organisation can involve volunteers only in proportion of 5 percent of its employees. I believe that this might be a problem for many small NGOs which have development problems, as it is very important for newly established small organisations to have as many volunteers as possible,”* Lusine Manukyan said.

According to her, their organisation often involves volunteers in their activities and at the moment they have two volunteers; in case the law is adopted in that form, they may have to stop cooperating with volunteers.

Ms Ninel Hovnanyan, a representative of the “Soldier's Mother” NGO, attached great importance to the idea of having a separate law coordinating this field. *“I think the law will be effective if it is adopted. Thus, we will understand what steps we should take. If we get acquainted with the terms of the contract, we will also learn the way we should prepare and sign contracts with volunteers,”* she said, adding that, of course, certain provisions of the current draft should be reviewed.

If you also are a civic activist and want to receive legal support, please contact us at info@armla.am to register for the upcoming training and receive legal advice.

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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