



PRESS RELEASE

11 April 2018

Yerevan

Development of Technical and Professional Skills: the First Stage of CSO Incubators has been launched

On April 11, the opening of the first stage of the Civil Society Organisations' (CSO) incubators in the framework of the EU-funded "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue" Project was held simultaneously in Yerevan, Vanadzor, Gavar, Gyumri and Kapan cities.

Mr. Emin Yeritsyan, Coordinator of Local Self-Government and Related Sectors of the Project, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia; Mr. Hakob Avagyan, the Executive Director of the Project Partner SME Partnership Association, Business and Related Sectors' Coordinator of the Project; Mr. Khachik Gevorgyan, Coordinator of Education and Related Sectors of the project, Executive Director of "Civitas" NGO; Mr. Marat Atovmyan, Mentors' Group Coordinator of the project incubators, conducted the events in Gyumri, Vanadzor, Gavar, and Kapan cities respectively.

During the event in Yerevan, Mr. Karen Zadoyan, Project Manager and President of the Armenian Lawyers' Association, mentioned that the mission of CSO incubators is to provide professional and technical assistance to Armenian CSOs to develop their skills in 4 areas, which are:

- Monitoring of public budgets and policies;
- Development of evidence based public policies;
- Coalition building and development;
- Constructive participation/dialogue with the Government and Local self Government in public policy development processes.

"The lion's share of the development of public policies is borne by government, and the government consists of ministries and affiliated bodies. It is necessary to have their contacts, work with them, and conduct a constructive dialogue. Soon a contact database will be created; meetings will be arranged between the two parties. You will be able to make our activities more effective through constructive cooperation," he said.

The CSO incubators will be conducted in two stages in the following five cities: Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Gavar and Kapan. 36 CSOs selected among the CSOs that have completed the CSO capacity building training organised by the American University of Armenia, will take part in each stage.

Upon completion of CSO incubators, 33 grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. It is anticipated to provide 16-17 grants at each stage.

CSOs of Tavush Marz will attend the incubator in Vanadzor; Aragatsotn CSOs, based on their geographical location, will participate in the incubators in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor cities, and Vayots Dzor CSOs, based on their geographical location, will attend the incubators in Kapan or Yerevan.



This Project is funded by the European Union.

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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.

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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