



PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

Minister of Economic Development and Investment Mr. Artsvik Minasyan met with the Representatives of the "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue" Project

On 11 June, Minister of Economic Development and Investment Mr. Artsvik Minasyan and Deputy Minister Mr. Albert Babayan met with the representatives of coalitions that were awarded sub-grants in business and economy target sectors in the framework of the EU-funded "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue" Project Manager Mr. Karen Zadoyan and representatives of the coalitions which received financing in the framework of the project and currently are implementing project in the business and economy sectors.

The meeting was aimed to present to the Minister the projects "New Strategy for the Effective Development of SME Sector in Armenia" and "Participatory Monitoring for the Establishment of Smart Communities in Armenia" and to achieve agreement for their effective implementation.

Minister Artsvik Minasyan attached importance to the project and the work carried out, noting that they will jointly develop new ideas and programs. He mentioned that there are some ideas in the ministry that should be transformed into a conceptual program.

He also noted that the Prime Minister shall make new appointments at the ministry on deputy minister's level in the nearest future, and many reforms will be made at the ministry, and the public sector's involvement in these processes will be desirable.

Mr. Karen Zadoyan, presented the "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue" Project, noting that the capacity of NGOs are being developed in two directions so that they can be competitive in the work with relevant government and local self-government bodies as well as develop dialogue with them.

"Cooperation with this ministry is primary for business, and it should be strong and productive. Currently we have such opportunity. One of our key points is support for the development of small and medium-size businesses; here we have a budget and an expert team so that we can work out a dialogue model right from now on through dialogue. Let's set the right bases to be useful both for the ministry and for the public organisations so that we can use the potential and the provided financial resources effectively," Hakob Avagyan, the Executive Director of the Project Partner SME Cooperation Association, Business and Related Sectors Coordinator of the Project said.

Mr. Grisha Hovsepyan, the "New Strategy for the Effective Development of SME Sector in Armenia" Project Manager, which has been awarded sub-grant in the target business sector of CCD Project, noted that the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments is bearer of policy responsible for the SME strategy. "It will be great if you as a bearer of political responsibility and we, who are willing to have our role in it, develop a joint working order, understand all the directions and work more efficiently," he said.



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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.

Ms Satik Badeyan, President of the Association of Social Enterprises of Armenia, presented what social enterprise is: "It is a new phenomenon both in the world and in Armenia, and has evolved over the past few years, but in many countries, it is developing rapidly and getting support from the state. It is viewed as a very good mechanism for supporting the government to achieve economic development and addressing community and social issues. "

Minister Artsvik Minasyan was interested in this idea and mentioned that currently, in the stage of tax reforms and a study of the sphere may be conducted and the results can be presented to be included in the development of the public policy.

He also proposed to include in the business plans the families of servicemen killed during the 4-Day April War in 2016. Karen Zadoyan mentioned that they would organise a discussion, and in case if the cooperation is large, they could organise a conference with participation of CSOs and the government.

At the end of the meeting, Artsvik Minasyan noted that they are ready for full fledged cooperation and involvement of all departments of the Ministry.

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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