



## PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

### **Amicus Curiae: the Role of the New Institute as a Democratic Structure was discussed**

Today, on 19 June, a meeting-discussion on the concept of "*Amicus Curiae*" institute and the possibility of its implementation in Armenia was held within the scope of the EU-funded "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue" project. The representatives of judicial bodies and civil society, as well as experts attended the event.

Mr. Narek Yenokyan, Lawyer/Expert of the Project presented the "*Amicus Curiae*" institute in the judicial practice. He noted that it has two objectives: first, to help the court to take a more democratic and acceptable act for the public, when discussing a **major** or **controversial** issue of concern for the public. And second, to provide a **wide range of involvement** of the public in the court proceedings and utilize the potential of the specialized agencies in the judicial processes, to assist the court.

Narek Yenokyan spoke about the role of the human rights defender as *amicus curiae* and presented the international practice. Ms Vanuhi Paytyan, from the Human Rights Defender's Office of the RA, stated that the Defender has no right to intervene in the proceedings and only has the right to appeal to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia on the compliance of the laws with the fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms.

Ms Meri Harutyunyan, Lawyer/Expert of the Project, spoke about the role of non-governmental organisations as *amicus curiae*, and presented the international practice. During the discussion, the employee of the Judicial Department of the Republic of Armenia Ms Margarit Amyan raised the question whether there are practical examples when a non-governmental organisation has acted as an *amicus curiae*.

Mary Harutyunyan presented that the Open Society Justice Initiative and the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute (MMLPI) had provided legal conclusions regarding the issue that the case *Tatyana Romanenko v. Russia* was subject of the ECHR examination. Moreover, these observations include judicial practice of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and India.

As a result of the discussion, a number of observations and recommendations were made about the positive and negative aspects of the institution that will be systematized and become subject to further discussions, the current obstacles to the institutionalization will be clarified and steps to address them will be taken.

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.



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Delegation of the European Union to Armenia  
Tel.: +37410 54 64 94



Armenian Lawyers' Association  
Address: 7 Nalbandyan Str., Suite 2,  
Yerevan, Armenian, 0010

Tel.: +37410 54 01 99  
Fax: +37410 58 02 99



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 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.

**Astghik Karapetyan**

**PR Coordinator**

Tel.:540199,

E-mail: [info@armla.am](mailto:info@armla.am),

URL: <http://www.armla.am>, <http://ccd.armla.am>



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