



PRESS RELEASE

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Yerevan

The Society Must be Aware of What Will Change in Its Life as a Result of Transitional Justice: Karen Zadoyan

The Civil Society-Government Forum entitled “*The Possibilities of Introducing Mechanisms of Transitional Justice in the RA in the Light of International Experience*” organised by the Armenian Lawyers’ Association in cooperation with the RA Government within the framework of the “Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” project funded by the European Union was held on 28 November 2018.

Acting First Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan thanked the organisers in his welcoming speech for organising such an event, mentioning that transitional justice is interesting not only to professionals, but also to wider society. He noted that massive violations of human rights have taken place in Armenia throughout many years, and there had been even bloody pages, and today there is a possibility to disclose the truth.

“There must be criminal cases, the guilt, the crime and the names of the violators should be recorded, so that such these things are not repeated again, and they will be forgiven on behalf of the society through reconciliation,” A. Mirzoyan said.

H.E, Piotr Antoni Świtalski, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, noted in his welcoming speech that weather or not Armenia will proceed with introducing elements of the restorative justice is a sovereign decision of its people. However, if request is made to the EU, they are ready to support the Government in this process. “The EU – as the largest contributor to the transitional justice process, especially in its neighbourhood, can offer exchange of best experience and advice on how to connect this process with the overall justice reform,” he said.

He added, EU is probably the largest financial contributor in the field of transitional justice. However, the states have to decide themselves whether, how and when to implement it, and no one, even friendly states, should intervene.

“We will never try to give even a hint of advice on how TJ should be conducted it in Armenia... The comprehensive and transparent nature of the process is essential, otherwise any TJ efforts will end up with selective justice... I believe that Armenia should make all efforts to avoid this,” Świtalski said.

He added, “Irrespective of this decision, **the EU continues its support to the justice sector reform in Armenia**. Recently a high-level **Policy Dialogue on Justice** sector reform has been launched, marking an important step in assisting the Armenian authorities in reforming the overall structure and functioning of the justice sector. This will contribute to efficient and effective administration of justice in line with EU standards and Armenia's commitments under CEPA.”

“We, as a committed project and organisation, undertook the organisation of this forum by involving Armenia’s independent and strong expert potential. We have carried out extensive research on transitional justice, studying the experience of around 35 countries, both successful and failed,” Karen Zadoyan, the



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.

“Commitment to Constructive Dialogue” Project Manager and the President of the Armenian Lawyers’ Association, said.

He mentioned that the first lessons to learn from the international experience is that the society should be aware of transitional justice, its objectives, and, most importantly, the people should know what will change in their lives as a result of this process.

The results of the study will be summarised after the conference, through adding all proposals that will greatly assist the government and political forces in making final decisions on implementation of transitional justice.

Ambassadors of foreign states, high-ranking officials and representatives of RA state agencies, international organisations, civil society organisations, lawyers and experts were participated in the event.

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 provided sub-grants to 9 CSO coalitions for developing public policies and bringing significant changes in the 9 target sectors selected within the project.

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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