

Narrative Report of the Activities of EaP CSF Armenian National Platform

December 2011-November 2012

On March 1st, 2012 the meeting of the Armenian delegates of the EaP CSF attended by the representatives of other NGOs as well, members of CSF Armenian National Platform (ANP) was held. The meeting was chaired by Seyran Martirosyan, the ANP national coordinator.

The meeting attendees discussed the issue of making changes in the organizational principles of ANP agreed on November 21st, 2011. Regarding the draft report titled “Strengthening of civil society in the Eastern Partnership Countries, including the question of cooperation between government and civil society, and the question of the reforms aimed at empowerment of civil society” developed by the Euronest Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society, it was decided to send to the National Assembly as one package. Later on, 9 out of 18 suggestions were included in the report.

On 26th May, 2012 Gyumri hosted the open session of the EaP CSF Armenian delegates, as well as representatives of a number of Armenian NGOs and guests, such as Krzysztof Bobinski, the member of EaP CSF Steering Committee and Olga Stuzhinskaya, the coordinator of the EaP CSF 1st working group.

The following issues were discussed: RA National Assembly elections from the viewpoint of the civil society: the activity of working groups of the CSF Armenian National Platform (ANP) and the developments since the Poznan Meeting. The reports of group coordinators: discussion of ANP membership applications from CSOs.

The session attendees actively discussed the observer activity implemented by CSOs during the RA National Assembly elections, pointed out the main shortcomings that should be paid attention to at the coming presidential elections. The CSF delegates decided to coordinate all the presented recommendations and observations and come up with a public announcement regarding the RA NA elections.

On July 4 a conference “Armenia in Europe” on the occasion of the visit of the President of European Council Herman van Rompuy took place in Yerevan. The National Coordinator Seyran Martirosyan and the coordinator of the WG1 of the ANP Boris Navasardyan were among the organizers of the conference. Several representatives of ANP were among the speakers in the conference.

On September, 2012, the National Coordinator Seyran Martirosyan and the coordinator of the ANP WG1 Boris Navasardyan took part in organizing the seminar “Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Democratic Governance, which was initiated by EU Advisory group in Armenia and took place on 27-28 September in Yerevan. The keynote speech in the event was provided by Stefan Fuele, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. Several representatives of ANP were among the speakers in the seminar.

A new SG was established in accordance with the CSF-3 decision to launch additional 5th Working Group (on social dialogue) in the Forum. This new SG, still within WG1, is aimed to ensure proper preparations for the formation of the new WG on the national level. Levon Khachatryan, Trade Unions’ Confederation of Armenia was nominated the responsible person for this SG.

Since 2010 the weekly newsletter (in Armenian and English) of the EaP CSF is being regularly published as a cooperation product of the organizations of the Armenian National Platform Working

Group 1 (Yerevan Press Club, Eurasia Partnership Foundation and Yerevan Office of Friedrich Ebert Foundation). The newsletter has about 1,000 subscribers in Armenia and abroad.

On January 20, 2012, meeting of the ANP 1st group (Democracy, Human Rights, Good governance) took place. The participants nominated those responsible for the work of sub-groups (human rights – Artur Sakunts, judiciary reform – Avetik Ishkhanyan, anti-corruption – Sona Ayvazyan, media – Boris Navasardyan, public administration – David Tumanyan,, visa facilitation – Stepan Grigoryan).

In February-May 2012 group of ANP WG1 members took part in the work on the second edition of the European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership countries (the first “pilot” edition on the “Index” was issued in November 2011. The presentation of the new edition, covering period till March 2012 (inclusive), took place in Yerevan on June 8. Armenian national team leader for this research is Boris Navasardyan, ANP WG1 coordinator.

The WG coordinator reminded that draft documents regulating CSF activities were circulated by the CSF Steering Committee among the CSF delegates, and suggested to discuss and comment on those documents. The CSF draft strategic concept after discussion was approved by the participants.

On February 18 and March 6 two coordination meetings of CSOs- members of ANP WG1 engaged with election processes took place. The participants of the meetings shared their plans connected to the Armenian Parliamentary elections and discussed prospects of cooperation. Members of the WG1 contributed a lot to various aspects of the electoral process, such as observation, monitoring of broadcast and print media, as well as attendance by media of pre-election events of the parties and candidates, administering iditord.am web-portal (to collect signals about violations), etc.

On March 29, 2012, the CSF Armenian Delegates adopted the amended version of the Organizational Principle of the ANP elaborated by Yerevan Press Club (original version of the Principles were developed by the YPC and Helsinki Committee of Armenia and adopted on November 21, 2011). The amended version brought the Principles in compliance with the new regulatory documents of the CSF adopted in the 3rd assembly of the CSF in Poznan (November 30, 2011).

On April 10 statement of ANP was issued on civil society role in the Parliamentary elections.

On April 12, 2012, WG1 of ANP proposed the agenda for the upcoming CSF WG1 meeting in Brussels (June 6), which was taken as basis. Later on May 9 under ANP WG1 suggestion minor change was introduced in the agenda. On April 20 and 26 upon recommendation of WG1 Armenian speaker was nominated for the seminar on election to take place after the CSF WG1 meeting.

On May 14 and 18, 2012, consultations took place between ANP members representing WG1 and Centre for European Studies about the initiative to organize a conference “Armenia in Europe” on July 4, 2012, on the occasion of the visit of the President of European Council Herman van Rompuy.

On May 26-27, 2012, the first seminar of series of four dedicated to the priorities of CSF WG1 was organized by Yerevan Press Club in Gyumri. The topic was freedom of media and visa facilitation. The seminar was attended by members of the WG1 of the ANP and members of CSF Steering Committee (Olga Stuzhinskaya and Krzysztof Bobinski).

During the event a suggestion was made to approve statement regarding attacks on representatives of sexual minorities.

On June 9-10, 2012, the second seminar of the series was organized by YPC in Aghveran. The participants (40 in number) represented media, human rights, journalistic and other NGOs of Armenia, experts from Ukraine (namely the initiator of the Index of European Integration for EaP

countries Iryna Solonenko) and Georgia. The title of the event was “The Role of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Fostering Judiciary Reform and Monitoring of Democratization Processes. Main issues discussed: European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries in 2012; implementation of recommendations of the EaP Civil Society Forum on monitoring of democratic reforms in Armenia; perspectives for strengthening ties between EaP CSF and Armenian NGOs in the field of monitoring of democratization processes; civil society participation in judiciary reforms; the role of EaP CSF in fostering judiciary reforms in Armenia; perspectives for strengthening ties between EaP CSF and Armenian NGOs in the field of judiciary reforms.

Prior the seminar presentation of the Index took place in Yerevan on June 8. Deputy RA Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Deputy Head of EU delegation in Armenia Onno Simons were among speakers in the event.

On July 6-8, 2012, the third seminar of series of four dedicated to the priorities of CSF WG1 was organized by Yerevan Press Club in Vanadzor. The title was “The Role of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Implementing Reforms in the Fields of Public Administration and Fight against Corruption”. The participants represented media and NGO sector of Armenia. Among the participants/speakers was the coordinator of anti-corruption WSG of the CSF Ivan Presnyakov, as well as representatives of Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), which head coordinates the CSF Public Administration WSG.

On August-September the coordinator of the ANP WG1 Boris Navasardyan was taking part in the discussion on the panels on elections, fighting corruption and freedom of media, included in the agenda of the Assembly of the Civil Society Forum to take place in Stockholm on November 29-30, 2012. Boris Navasardyan in contact with the CSF steering committee and organizers of the CSF 4th Assembly was also organizing the panel on media, which he will moderate.

On November 2-4, 2012, the fourth seminar of the series - “The Role of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Fostering Reform in the Fields of Human Rights and Social Dialogue” dedicated to the priorities of CSF WG1 was organized by YPC in Dilijan. The title was “The Role of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Fostering Reform in the Fields of Human Rights and Social Dialogue”. The participants were representatives of Armenian NGO community, mainly those selected for the CSF Assembly in Stockholm and specializing on human rights and social dialogue issues. The event was also attended by representatives of Belarus and Georgia (namely the coordinator of the WSG on judiciary reform Tamar Chugoshvili). Main issues discussed: situation of human rights in Armenia from the civil society’s perspective; the implementation of EaP CSF recommendations on human rights in Georgia; the role of social dialogue in democracy building and the expectations from the newly-established CSF Fifth Working Group on Social Dialogue; activities of the CSF Armenian National Platform and its future; preparation to the the Fourth EaP Civil Society Forum.

5 organizations in EaP ANP WG2 had meetings with the group members in post-Poznan period, during which economic issues have been discussed. There was a close cooperation with the director of “Foundation for small and medium businesses” Gagik Poghosyan, with whom WG2 participated in different events and raised the issue of the regress of small and medium businesses in Armenia.

On July 9, 2012 WG participated in the meeting of EaP WG2 in Brussels, where they discussed the economic problems in the partner countries. Particularly it was mentioned that small and medium businesses developed a little almost in 6 EaP countries.

Members of the WG3 “Environment, Climate change and Energy Security” of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum participated in the discussions of the WG3 on the issue of Eastern Partnership Energy Security Index by e-mail and Skype.

The association “For Sustainable Human Development” took part in the project “Evaluation of the environmental activities by the priority of Flagman initiative of EaP by proper ecological management in the EaP countries” (the project has finished in November 2011).

The WG3 members participated in the Meeting “Participatory Democracy: the Role of Civil Society”, organized by EU Advisory group to the RoA. 18. February 2012; International Conference “Sustainable Development in EAP countries: Tacking Stock of the Progress and Setting Goals on the Road to Rio+20”, Kiev, April 19-20, 2012. Organizers: Ukrainian National Environmental NGO “MAMA-86” and Friedrich Ebert Foundation. K. Danielyan made a presentation; Annual Meeting of the Working Group “Environment, Climate change and Energy Security” of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Tbilisi, November 7-9, 2012. K. Danielyan made a presentation.

In January WG4 has discussed all the possible activities to be conducted in 2012, and 5 project packages have been developed – cultural, voluntarism, educational, youth and networking.

For the development of the projects they have cooperated with the RA Ministry of Culture, the coordinator of the National Tempus Office Lana Karlova, with Counterpart and others.

On February 10 we had a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Culture Arevik Samuelyan and presented the activities of WG4. The Deputy Minister suggested to prepare the package of the projects, which are to be implemented in Armenia in the framework of 4th Platform.

The WG4 chair Tevan Poghosyan has been elected as a deputy for the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.

Each year USAID has been producing the NGO Sustainability Index that covers 29 countries in the Europe and Eurasia Region, including Armenia. The index reports on the strength and overall viability of civil society organizations in each country of the region, highlighting both advances and setbacks in sectoral development, and allowing for comparisons across countries and regions over time.

The Index is an important and unique tool for local CSOs, governments, donors, academics, and others to understand and measure the sustainability of the NGO sector.

To produce the Index, an Expert Panel is formed in each country to assess the situation regarding CSO sector in the country. The national Coordinator Seyran Martirosyan was invited to take part in the expert panel. The objective of the Panel is to develop a consensus based rating for each of the seven dimensions of NGO Sustainability covered by the Index.

These dimensions include: 1. Legal Environment.2. Organizational Capacity.3. Financial Viability.4. Advocacy.5. Service Provision.6. Infrastructure.7. Public Image.

12 new CSOs became members of ANP.