

ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

ARMENIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

NOVEMBER 2015- END OF SEPTEMBER 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM



The Armenian National Platform (ANP) of EaP Civil Society Forum was initiated in December 2009 and formally launched on June 7, 2010 as the first national platform from among the EaP countries. Since its establishment, the ANP has become a valuable tool to facilitate the achievement of the

goals of the Eastern Partnership. In the year 2013-2014 ANP has evolved and further established itself as a vibrant institution which brings together nearly all the largest and most active NGOs in Armenia.

Currently there are 228 CSOs registered as members of the CSF Armenian National Platform (as of September 2016). 21 new CSOs have joined the Platform during the reporting period, among which there are CSOs in the field of human rights, economy, environment, education, youth, culture, as well as newly-established NGOs from the above-mentioned fields that can potentially benefit from the opportunities provided by the ANP and contribute to the operation of their respective working groups. The majority of the new member CSOs are based in Yerevan; there are 10 new members coming from other cities/regions of Armenia. However, there is still the problem of disproportionality of regional representation in the Platform and the necessity to continue the targeted advocacy campaign in the regions of Armenia to have more regional NGOs in the Platform. The ANP Secretariat regional

meetings were aimed at advocating for the Armenian National Platform and introducing with the EaP priorities. Thanks to these meetings several regional NGOs became members of the Armenian National Platform. A product of the activation of the member CSOs is the ANP member's initiative to work on the amendments and supplements to the ANP organizational principles to contribute to a better functioning of the Platform.

KEY TOPICS/ISSUES OF FOCUS FOR THE BELARUSIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

The five working groups of the EaP CSF Armenian National Platform developed priorities for every sphere, which were incorporated into one document and presented to the EU Delegation in Armenia and RA authorities. The key issues of this document are the following:

- Public discussions and awareness raising on the RA new Electoral code development consultations;
- Contribution of the EaP CSF ANP to the the new EU-Armenia framework agreement negotiations;
- Development and submission of recommendations on Draft Electoral Code to the Venice Commission, the National Assembly, international organizations and political parties;
- ANP engagement in civil protection activities;
- Follow up on developments around the NGO law;
- Identification of issues existing in EU-Armenia economic cooperation and development of recommendations.

ACTIVITIES AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2015-2016

Throughout the reporting year the ANP was trying to both follow and react to the developments in sphere of the EU-Armenia cooperation on official level and be proactive by consulting, proposing and raising issues important for the Armenian society and related to the logic of the EU-Armenia relations. The Platform has carried out substantial activities during

the campaign of the referendum on amendments to the RA Constitution, the meetings with the RA authorities on the RA new Electoral Code, as well as the EU-Armenia new framework agreement negotiations. The ANP also reacted to the four-day war and July crisis in Yerevan.

The following activities were carried out by the ANP in accordance with its priorities:

1. Meetings, assemblies, consultations of the EaP CSF Armenian National Platform

- Meeting with Nerses Ter-Vardanyan, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Armenia on ANP Working Group 4 initiative to discuss the issue of Armenia's joining the Creative Europe programme (12 participants). October 31, 2015.
- CSF Armenian Delegates General Meeting held Yerevan with 19 participants. November 7, 2015: Discussion of ANP delegation activities ahead of the 7th EaP CSF Annual Assembly held in Kyiv on November 19-21, 2016; ANP possible contribution to the EU-RA new framework agreement negotiations.
- EaP CSF Armenian National Platform Conference on the provision of physical accessibility of persons with disabilities to hotel complexes, resorts and business centers held in Yerevan with 28 participants. December 9, 2015.
- EaP CSF ANP Armenian Delegates General Assembly held in Yerevan with 37 participants. December 21, 2015. Topics covered: ANP annual activity report; Presentation of the results of CSF Kyiv Annual Assembly; Elections of WG new coordinators; Discussion and presentation of WG priorities for the upcoming year.
- WG 4 meeting with the participation of invited architects held in Yerevan with 8 participants to discuss Zvartnots airport old building demolition issue. February 13, 2016
- Open meeting of the Working Group 1 of the EaP CSF ANP held in Yerevan with 26 participants. March 23, 2016. Topics covered: the role and engagement of the Armenian National Platform in the process of development of the RA new Electoral Code; presentation of WG 1 priorities for 2016.
- General Meeting of the EaP CSF ANP: Discussion on the RA Draft Electoral Code held in Eurasia Partnership Foundation Office held in Yerevan with 37 participants. April 11, 2016. Topics covered: the position of EU on the discussion and content of the RA Draft

Electoral Code; summary of the ANP recommendations on the RA Draft Electoral Code and discussion of presentation methods.

- ANP assisted Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in South Caucasus in the organization of the conference “Building Consensus on the New Electoral Code” held in Yerevan (more than 80 participants). April 26, 2016. Main topic covered: international communities’ support for the new Electoral Code. Stakeholders’ position - discussions within 4+4+4 format.
- General Meeting of the EaP CSF ANP with 50 participants to elect the delegates to the 8th EaP Civil Society Forum Annual Assembly to be held in Brussels on November 28-30, 2016. Yerevan. May 10, 2016.
- EaP CSF Armenian Delegates General Meeting held in Yerevan with 32 participants. May 16, 2016. Topics covered: Amendments to the organizational principles of the ANP; creation of a working group to collect recommendations on the amendments to the organizational principles and presentation of a draft document to ANP members.
- EaP CSF Armenian National Platform Conference on current state Of EU-Armenia relations and the mechanisms of civil society participation held in Yerevan with 62 participants. May 30, 2016. Main topics: current state and perspectives of EU-Armenia relations; the role and participation mechanisms of the ANP and civil society in EU-Armenia relations; presentation of CSF 2016 regrating projects.
- Working meeting of civil protection Initiative with the participation of representatives from the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations held in Yerevan with 11 participants. July 16, 2016. Main topics: possible civil protection training for ANP members to be conducted by Ministry of Emergency Situation experts; organization of a joint conference on civil protection; ANP engagement for the enhancement of civil protection in Armenia.

2. Statements, position papers of the Armenian National Platform

- EaP CSF ANP Statement on Armenia’s joining the Creative Europe Programme. November 16, 2015. <https://eparmenianews.wordpress.com/2015/11/17/issue-229/>

- EaP CSF ANP Statement on numerous violations recorded during the December 6, 2015 referendum on amendments to the RA Constitution. December 9, 2015.
 - <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2015/12/11/issue-232/>
- EaP CSF ANP Message to hotel complexes, resorts, business centers and other agencies specialized in hospitality sphere operating in Armenia and EaP CSF ANP Open letter to the RA Government on the provision of physical accessibility of persons with disabilities to hotel complexes, resorts and business centers,. December 9, 2015.
 - <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2015/12/11/%D5%A9%D5%B8%D5%B2%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4-232/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on the detention of civic activist Vardges Gaspari. February 26, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/02/26/issue-237/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on the primary joint demands related to the RA Electoral Code. March 24, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/03/25/issue-239/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on engagement in the work for improvement of the draft Electoral Code of Armenia. March 28, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/04/08/issue-241/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on the military actions in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. April 11, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/04/15/issue-241-2/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on the ongoing events related to the armed assault by “Sasna Tsrer” Group. July 21, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/07/25/issue-247/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on the arrest of ANP members. July 30, 2016.

- <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/2016/07/30/issue-249/>
- EaP CSF ANP Statement on Russian border guards' unlawful actions against RA citizen. September 16, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/>
- EaP CSF ANP Position on the September 9 and 12 statements of non-governmental organizations regarding the developments around the new Electoral Code. September 16, 2016. <https://eaparmenianews.wordpress.com/>

3. Developing working relations with other national platforms and CSF Secretariat

Armenian National Platform closely cooperated with other EaP CSF national platforms to improve the relations between ANP and other national platforms and to share best practices among the national platforms of the EaP six countries. A product of this cooperation is the Monitoring Mission of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) on the civil society, media and human rights situation in Armenia during the period of 9-15 August 2016.



The team of the Mission was composed of leading experts in the field of human rights from Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. EaP CSF Armenian National Platform provided logistics and organizational assistance to the Mission and covered the accommodation expenses of the team members.

Main objectives:

- Assessment of the situation with non-governmental organizations and media in the aftermath of the political crisis during the period of 17-31 July 2016;
- Acquisition of complete and accurate information about the situation in various fields of human rights;
- Interviews with the representatives of civil society, leading human rights organizations, experts and lawyers. Separate meetings were held with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Armenia and representatives of major intergovernmental organizations;
- Preparation of the report and a wide range of recommendations.

4. Maintenance of the website of the CSF Armenian National Platform, issuing the ANP weekly newsletter

The WordPress [webpage](#) of EaP CSF Armenian National Platform includes general information about the platform, organization principles, reports, documents, statements and weekly update on the Eastern Partnership, EaP Civil Society Forum and ANP activities, as well as information for the civil society (projects, available grants, studies, etc). All the information is available in Armenian and English. During the reporting period the website of the Armenian National Platform published 30 issues of the ANP newsletter which contained the most important news regarding Eastern Partnership, EaP Civil Society Forum, EU Neighbourhood Policy, EU-Armenia relations, EU Delegation to Armenia, various funding, granting and study opportunities for Armenian CSOs, as well as all the Statements of the EaP CSF ANP and the CSF Steering Committee regarding events in Armenia. The number of followers of the Newsletter on Facebook substantially increased. Currently there are about 970 followers on Facebook and the newsletter is disseminated among more than 800 subscribers via email.

ISSUES/TOPICS RAISED BY THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

With the decision-makers

- Referendum on amendments to the RA Constitution;
- RA new Electoral Code;
- Physical accessibility of persons with disabilities to hotel complexes, resorts and business centres;
- Armenia's membership in Creative Europe program;
- Armenia-EU framework agreement negotiations;
- Improvement of the Civil protection system.

With the broader public

- Armenia's joining the Creative Europe Programme;
- Violations recorded during the 6 December 2015 referendum on amendments to the RA Constitution;
- Detention of civic activists;
- RA new Electoral Code;
- Military actions in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone;
- July 17-31 political crisis in Armenia, etc.

In the EU

ANP priorities in light of the EU-Armenia new framework agreement negotiations; RA new Electoral Code, July crisis and Monitoring Mission report; issue of political prisoners in Armenia.

ISSUES RAISED WHICH HAVE HAD AN INFLUENCE IN ARMENIA

- Package of ANP recommendations on the RA new Electoral Code and on 4+4+4 format discussions on the Electoral Code.
- Advocacy meeting to present the Monitoring Mission report;

- Meetings with EU officials visiting Armenia and discussion of issues related to Constitutional referendum, electoral code, corruption, Armenia-EU framework agreement negotiations, Nagorno-Karabakh issue, Armenian-Turkish relations.

STUDIES/ASSESSMENTS/REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS DELIVERED TO POLICY MAKERS

- Package of recommendations for all the spheres, developed by the ANP WGs for the ENP review;
- Recommendations of the ANP Working groups developed during the ANP conference in May.

RECOMMENDATIONS/STUDIES TAKEN ONBOARD BY DECISION MAKERS

- ANP recommendations, statements on the RA new Electoral Code;
- Armenia's joining the Creative Europe Programme.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES MOST OPEN TO COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL PLATFORM

- RA Ministry of Emergency Situations;
- RA Ministry of Culture;
- RA Ministry of Justice.

NEW INITIATIVES BORN AS A RESULT OF THE REGIONAL WG MEETINGS OR JOINT NATIONAL PLATFORM EVENTS

- Launch of discussions with RA Ministry of Emergency Situations on the enhancement of civil protection both in Yerevan and other regions of Armenia;
- Strengthening cooperation with regional organizations;
- Support to EU Delegation with the organization of regional meetings.

VISIBILITY AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL PLATFORM IN ARMENIA

Efforts were intensified for a more effective operation of CSOs in implementing efficiently the Eastern Partnership priorities, which activated the CSOs in presenting recommendations

and priorities for the new EU-Armenia negotiations, and made available the EaP related information to a broader audience. In the reporting year the ANP member CSOs have developed a number of joint projects, statements, recommendations, concepts and other documents which were disseminated to the society thanks to the ANP Webpage, newsletter and Armenian media outlets.

POSITIVE MENTIONS OF THE NATIONAL PLATFORM AND THE FORUM AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN ARMENIAN MEDIA

All the activities of CSF Armenian National Platform were broadly covered by the Armenian press, online media and major TV companies. Here are some links on several Forum and ANP initiatives:

<http://www.azatutyun.am/s?k=%D4%B1%D5%AC%D5%A3+%D6%84%D5%B0%D6%86>

<http://www.aravot.am/?s=%D5%A1%D5%AC%D5%A3+%D6%84%D5%B0%D6%86>

<http://www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/politics/view/131678>

<http://armtimes.com/hy/article/90047>

<http://hetq.am/arm/news/67550/arevelyan-gortsynkerutyun-qaxaqaciakan-hasarakutyun-forumi-xekavar-komitei-haytararutyuny-hayoc-cexaspanutyun-veraberyal.html>

<http://news.am/arm/news/339957.html>

<http://yerkirmedia.am/1political/lxh-hh-evropakan-khorhrdaran-koch/>

THE NATIONAL PLATFORM AND THE EaP CSF SECRETARIAT

The EaP CSF Armenian National Platform and the member CSOs received regular technical and administrative assistance from the Secretariat. The Secretariat ensured an effective working environment for the working groups, made necessary arrangements for meeting venues, provided translation, dissemination, printing of all necessary materials, and resolved various communication issues. The following outcomes of the Action for the reporting year are particularly noteworthy: maintenance and update of the CSF databases, engagement of the CSF Armenian National Platform in key processes in Armenia, a better presentation to the public of EaP and EU-Armenia related topics, increased efficiency of the Working Groups, involvement of new organizations, enhancement of cooperation with other national platforms, the recent example of which was the one-week EaP CSF fact finding mission in Armenia on Yerevan July events.