

NEWSLETTER

OSCE Office in Yerevan

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Model OSCE Conference



The Office held a **Model OSCE Conference** in co-operation with the School for Young Leaders in Yerevan on 2-3 May. Some 60 youth between the ages of 18-30 discussed migration and economic stability during the conference. The Model OSCE is a simulation of the OSCE core decision-making body – the Permanent Council.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM PRESENTED IN ARMENIA

The traditional concept of security is currently being redefined to include not only the security of states but also the safety and well-being of their people.

The rationale behind this is the idea of the indivisibility of security, which is enshrined in the core principles of the OSCE. Reforming the security sector is a political and technical challenge that requires the participation of a wide range of state and non-state actors to work together across traditional institutional boundaries. The concept and evolution of security

sector reform was introduced for the first time to 30 participants from various Armenian state institutions during a four-day training course organized on 11-14 June by the OSCE Office jointly with the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Austria's Defence and Sports Ministry, and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

The training, which was conducted by four experts from the DCAF International Security Sector Advisory Team, was focused on the political nature of security sector reform, the challenges it poses, its relation to gender, and the notion of governance, as well as the roles and inclusion of state and non-state actors in security sector activities.

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

The OSCE continued implementing the EU-funded “Support to Two Cycles of Elections in Armenia” project with a particular focus on preparations for the Presidential and Yerevan City Council elections. Nearly 14,000 polling officials were trained in the weeks leading up to the February presidential elections, which, according to observers, reportedly resulted in better performance of the election commissions.

The project simultaneously enhanced civic monitoring of election processes by supporting five domestic observer groups which deployed monitors throughout the country and offered non-partisan reporting on polling day developments.

In an unprecedented event ten NGOs issued a joint statement on their findings and shared recommendations for improvement. Following up on one of the most crucial recommendations made with regard to previous elections in Armenia, the Office paid particular attention to the efficient investigation and prosecution of election-related crimes by organizing a workshop for Armenian prosecutors and investigators.

This project also sponsored a comprehensive monitoring exercise of electronic media during the campaign, and continued to offer support to the regional offices of the Armenian Human Rights Defender and its Rapid Reaction Groups.

ECONOMIC / ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Economic Diversification of Syunik Province



During his visit to Syunik on 16-18 May Ambassador Andrey Sorokin, Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, handed over hospitality training certificates to participants from Goris, Kapan, Sisian and Meghri.

The quick growth of the mining sector has created a need for economic diversification to mitigate economic security risks. Indeed, developing the Armenian tourism industry will help to create jobs and generate incomes in alternative industry sectors.

A hospitality training programme, organized by USAID and supported by the Office was attended by 140 participants from hotels, restaurants and B&Bs, as well as tourist guides from eight urban and rural communities in Syunik.

In 2014, the OSCE Programme Implementation Presence in Kapan plans to organize a donor and investor conference to promote investments in the non-mining sector, to establish a career centre for youth, to carry out an econometric modelling /cost-benefit analysis for regional administration, to develop green zones on mining waste, and to support labor unions in the mining sector.

The Ministry of Nature Protection rejected the Toukhmanuk tailing project submitted by Mego Gold Company for the construction of a new (3rd) tailing dump near the village of Melik (Aragatsotn province).

The local community had raised concerns over possibilities that pre-existing negative health and environmental impacts, which had begun in 2006 when the company developed the gold mine, would be exacerbated. At the request of the community, the Aparan Aarhus Centre, together with other civil society organizations, organized numerous awareness-raising activities and public discussions, which involved all stakeholders. Articles highlighting environmental concerns and expert analyses were published by the Centre and submitted to the government.

At the public hearings organized by the Ministry of Nature Protection mining's impact on health and the environment, as well as seismic risks, were discussed.

The Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken by the Ministry proved that the request to construct the tailing dump construction should be refused. The Aparan Aarhus Centre is continuing to contribute to Melik's community security through the provision of expert data and legal assistance in order to further improve the environmental and health security of the local population.



Aparan Aarhus Centre Helps Address Environmental Issues in Melik Village



National Centre for Legislative Regulation

Let's Cut Together!

Guillotine (Rapid Regulatory Simplification) Project

On May 13 the meeting of the Reform Council, the body responsible for the "Guillotine" project designated by the President and chaired by the Prime Minister, was held. The Director of the Reform Unit reported on the activities undertaken.

All the recommendations of Scott Jacobs, an international expert on reform processes, have been implemented in full and the toolkit for reformers, including e-Guillotine software – an important online gateway for reform systemization and management – has been launched.

Based on new information, the Reform Council adopted a work plan to last until the end of 2013 and identified the next set of sectors to be "guillotined".

The adoption of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) approach, which is important for achieving sustainability through reform, was also discussed.

At the Joint Dialogue Forum held on 13 June to discuss the progress report by the Reform Unit, the Office received an official request from the President's Chief Advisor to initiate fundraising activities for the next stage and the adoption of the RIA.

Online Reporting Ethics

Members of 17 leading Armenian online media outlets discussed challenges and prospects for the development of online media self-regulation in Armenia at a workshop on 8-9 June organized jointly by the OSCE Office and Journalists for the Future NGO. Participants talked about legal frameworks, copyright protection, online defamation, and online media ethics.

Fighting Transnational Threats and Terrorism

Armenian state representatives were introduced to the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Public Key Directory (PKD) at a two-day seminar on 22-23 May organized by the OSCE. PKD is a multilateral exchange tool to validate the authenticity of electronic security features stored in biometric passports. Prior to the event, the Office held several targeted meetings with key Armenian agencies to encourage Armenian membership for ICAO PKD as part of a comprehensive attempt to implement electronic passports. Workshop participants discussed ways to prevent terrorists and other criminals from crossing borders with forged travel documents.

Training for National Minorities

On 31 May the Office and the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation organized a five-day training course on organizational development for national minority organizations in Armenia. Representatives from nine national minority communities received training on organizational development, which was aimed at promoting the preservation and development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.

CAPACITY BUILDING



Human Rights Education

Teacher trainers in Armenia learned how to design human rights education programmes which relate to students' daily life in a three-day course organized by the OSCE Office together with the Armenian Centre for Democratic Education (CIVITAS) NGO in April.

Around 35 teacher trainers for secondary schools from different Armenian regions and specialists from the National Institute of Education responsible for training social science teachers discussed challenges and issues in planning, implementing and evaluating human rights education in secondary schools.

Within the framework of the Memorandum signed with the Ministry of Education and

Science, the Office also organized a workshop on 15-16 June aimed at revising social science subject standards for high schools.

In 2013 the Office prepared a manual on teaching human rights in the armed forces, which laid the foundation for a human rights training project for specific target groups of the Armenian Armed Forces implemented in close cooperation with the Armenian Defence Ministry.



Police Education

In April-May an international policing expert from the UK provided a series of training courses for the staff of the Armenian Police Educational Complex.

The goal of the training was to improve the quality of education and to strengthen the capacity of those who evaluate the training process. One of the courses focused on theory and contemporary approaches in police education and training, such as learning cycles, safe learning

environments, communication skills, and effective feedback, another course presented principles and application of evaluation and the last session was devoted to quality assurance in the effective management of training.

EVENTS / PUBLICATIONS

Criminal Justice Reform

New rules strengthening the rights of defendants as part of a revision of Armenia's law on criminal procedure were the focus of a workshop organized by the Office and the OSCE ODIHR on 19 March. Representatives from the Government Commission and the Working Group on Drafting the Criminal Procedure Code discussed new rules on evidentiary standards and the admission of evidence.

Experts from ODIHR presented international standards and legislation from common and civil law systems in the OSCE region.

A set of recommendations developed during the workshop served as a basis for further review of the draft Criminal Procedure Code on evidentiary rules. At the request of the Ministry of Justice, ODIHR provided legal opinion on the new draft Code in May.

In co-operation with ODIHR, the Office also organized a workshop which focused on the independence, accountability and professionalism of judges as part of the 2012-2016 governmental strategy for legal and judicial reforms. Participants exchanged views and offered inputs on the role of judicial administration bodies and of court presidents, on amending the criteria and procedures for evaluating the performance of judges, and on establishing a new Justice Academy.



Photo Exhibition on Press Freedom

On 3 May the OSCE, together with the Freedom of Information Centre, the EU Delegation and USAID, organized the “Freedom of the Press: The Right to Know” exhibition to mark World Press Freedom Day.

The exhibition showcased photos and caricatures through which photographers voiced protest against violations of press freedom, and stated their right to access information.



Honouring Human Rights Advocates

Civil rights activists, government officials, and media and civil society representatives were recognized for their contribution to promoting human rights in Armenia.

The OSCE Office, US Embassy, EU Delegation, British Embassy, Council of Europe and Counterpart International awarded honours to Naira Arakelyan (Armavir Development Centre), Levon Barseghyan (Asparez Club), Alaverdi Mayor Artavazd Varosyan, Civilnet TV, and the Europe-in-Law NGO at a special event on 13 June. The OSCE Office presented Naira Arakelyan with the “Woman of Courage” award.

Annual Report of the Cassation Court

A manual on the 2012 activities of the Criminal Chamber of the Cassation Court was prepared and published with OSCE support. The publication presents comprehensive information on the activities of the Chamber, including statistical data, judicial decisions and case law.

PSA on Anti-corruption

Within the framework of its project on promoting transparency and integrity in Armenia's higher education system, the Office released a public social advertisement on combatting corruption in higher education. The video clip is available on the OSCE website.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works for **stability**, **prosperity** and **democracy** in its 57 participating States through political dialogue on shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was established in 2000 to assist Armenia in the implementation of its OSCE commitments in all three aspects of security: politico-military, economic and environmental and the human dimension.

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