

Brief information on activities of the Anti-Corruption Council

The Anti-Corruption Council was established by Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 165-N of 19 February 2015 “On establishing an Anti-Corruption Council and an Expert Task Force, on approving the composition of the Council and the procedure for activities of the Anti-Corruption Council, the Expert Task Force, and the Anti-Corruption Programmes Monitoring Division of the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia”.

The first sitting of the Anti-Corruption Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) took place on 28 July 2015. The Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and its Implementation Action Plan for 2015-2018, the Draft Agreement on Co-operation between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the rules of procedure of the Anti-Corruption Council, the procedure for activities of the Expert Task Force adjunct to the Council, the procedure for selection of experts, the standards for selection thereof were discussed and approved during the sitting.

An analysis concerning imposition of criminal or administrative liability on legal persons for corruption-related offences was submitted for consideration by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. With regard to this issue, the Council considered it necessary to introduce a system for imposing administrative and/or criminal liability for corruption-related offences committed by legal persons. The Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia was assigned to include relevant provisions on imposing criminal and administrative liability for corruption-related offences committed by legal persons in the newly drafted Criminal Code and the Administrative Offences Code of the Republic of Armenia, as well as to submit them to the Government of the Republic of Armenia in accordance with the defined manner.

During the sitting, Siranush Sahakyan, Chairperson of the Commission on Ethics of High-Ranking Officials of the Republic of Armenia, presented the issue of imposing sanctions for violations committed by high-ranking officials in the process of declaration of assets and income. With regard to this issue, the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia was assigned to submit within a two-month period a Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia “On making amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of the Republic of Armenia” to the Government for consideration.

The enhancement of public confidence in tangible results of the activities of the Anti-Corruption Council was mentioned in the report of "Freedom of information center" NGO on the current situation and existing problems in the field of freedom of information as the main prerequisite for activities of the Council. The report addressed as a key issue the fact that secondary legislative acts deriving from the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On freedom of information" had not been adopted. As a result of the discussion, the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia was assigned to submit within a two-month period draft secondary legislative acts regulating the field of freedom of information to the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, as well as to analyse the legislation regulating the field of freedom of information and to compare it with the international best practice.

During the discussion of issues on participation of civil society in co-ordination of the policy with authorities and on establishment of Public Councils adjunct to ministers, the Yerevan Press Club presented a report, following consideration of which the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia was assigned to study within a two-month period and to submit to the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia model rules of procedure of Public Councils adjunct to the Ministries of the Republic of Armenia.

At the first sitting of the Council, Armenia’s joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was also announced. Davit Harutyunyan, Minister-Chief of Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, stated that this

organisation is a coalition of governments, industrial companies and civil society, which enables improving transparency of business activities in the field of industry and ensuring favourable competitive conditions. The Minister-Chief of Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia was assigned to co-ordinate the process of joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the activities for introduction of the relevant standards, as well as to create a platform for co-operation with the business community within the framework of activities of the Council and to organise meetings with business representatives once or twice a year for the purpose of addressing issues related to corruption risks.

The second sitting of the Council took place on 28 December 2015. At this sitting, the performance of the tasks assigned during the previous sitting was presented to the members of the Council, as well as the anti-corruption measures carried out in the fields of education and science, territorial administration, the necessity for further co-operation with international organisations and other issues were discussed, and as a result of the discussion relevant tasks were assigned.

The measures in the fields of education and territorial administration implemented during 2015 and planned for 2015-2016 within the framework of the Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy and its Implementation Action Plan for 2015-2018 were touched upon. During the sitting, in particular, the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia mentioned that jointly with the Open Society Foundations - Armenia activities were carried out for studying, assessing the results of "Strengthening integrity and fighting corruption in education" research conducted in 2014-2015 and taking further actions.

1. The First Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations reported to the Council on a number of measures carried out for enhancing transparency of activities of local self-government bodies and raising the public awareness, as well as on application of e-democracy tools. In particular, it was mentioned that SMS survey was conducted among citizens for the purpose of getting a

clearer picture of the priority of community issues, and that activities are underway for creating and updating websites for communities with population of 20 000 and more, publishing all the legal acts adopted by community authorities, notifying of the sittings of the Council of Elders, public discussions and hearings, as well as online broadcasting of the sittings of the Council of Elders.

Khachik Harutyunyan, representative of Transparency International NGO, presented a report titled “The private sector and the fight against corruption”, following consideration of which it was decided to assign the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, and the National Centre for Legislative Regulation Project Implementation Unit of the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia to continue submitting recommendations for simplifying administration. The necessity of making a risks assessment in the field of state revenue collection, as well as the implementation of measures based on that assessment within the shortest possible time period were emphasised as well.

During the second sitting of the Anti-Corruption Council, seven tasks were assigned with regard to further co-operation with the USAID, as well as international and other non-governmental organisations, fulfilment of international obligations assumed by the Republic of Armenia in this field, submission to the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of final versions of the Laws of the Republic of Armenia "On making supplements to the Administrative Offences Code of the Republic of Armenia " and “On making a supplement to the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On public service”” pertaining to violations committed in the process of declaration by officials, as well as with regard to further simplification of administration.

The fulfilment of the tasks is underway, and the process of their fulfilment is monitored by the Anti-Corruption Programmes Monitoring Division of the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The performance of current tasks will be presented during the next regular sitting of the Council, scheduled to be held in the second quarter of 2016 in accordance with Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 165-N of 19 February 2015.

**Anti-Corruption Programmes Monitoring Division
of the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia**