

EU-CIS Gender Watch

A Gender Analysis of the European Union Developmental Aid for Armenia



**The Network of East-West Women – Poland
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by Svetlana Aslanyan, CDCS



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Introduction

Basic information

Armenia is a small open economy with a population of about 3 million and a nominal GDP level of US\$2.8 billion in 2003. With a GNI per capita at about US\$950 (US\$3,770 in terms of purchasing power parity), Armenia is in the group of lower middle income countries. Real GDP growth has accelerated each year since 1999, reaching a record high of 13.9% in 2003. GDP composition has changed as construction and trade have picked up, supported by remittances and other private transfers, while agriculture has declined in relative terms (but still accounts for 21.5% of GDP, equal to industry). Industrial production is supported by new investment in mining, metallurgy, diamond polishing and food processing sectors. With continued strong economic growth, Armenia is expected to reach its pre-transition (1990) level of real GDP in 2005. Tourism and information and communication technologies are identified by the government as potential new growth areas but substantial new investment has yet to materialize.

Armenia declared its independence from the collapsing Soviet Union on September 23, 1991. Political and economic independence after the fall of the Soviet Union threw Armenia into economic collapse. Due to this economic crisis, hundreds of people were left unemployed, resulting in widespread poverty in the country. The situation was exacerbated by the terrible earthquake on December 7, 1988 which left half million people homeless. The Massacre of Armenian people in Azerbaijan (in Sumgait and Baku) created a wave of 350,000 refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The blockade, which continues till now, imposed by neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey. Aside from the human consequences, in terms of infrastructure, country the national power plant closed, and gas transmission to Armenia was resumed, all of which threw the country into **the dark and cold year's between 1992 and 1996**. The critical situation of transition period, economic blockade, and social polarization because of marketing relations left hard influence upon social-economic state of the country and caused migration growth. To a large extent, the crisis that Armenia experienced during the early- to mid-1990's having abated.

However, since 1991, Armenia is in transition towards a free market economy, Armenia was the first post-soviet republic who has privatized land and nearly finished the privatization of real estate. The country has incorporated all fundamental human rights and freedoms in its national policy. It is a signatory to numerous international conventions and treaties and is gradually integrating itself in to the world community.

In 2004 Armenia was classified as country with the transitional economy meanwhile Armenia is among industrially developed countries with high level of education

The Government of Armenia has been able to carry out wide-ranging economic reforms that have resulted in steady growth since 1995. New sectors, such as precious stone processing and jewelry making, information and communication technology, and tourism have begun to supplement more traditional sectors such as agriculture in the economy. Armenia has developed a varied and flexible economy,

due to the transportation limitations caused by the economic blockade imposed by two of its neighbors, Turkey and Azerbaijan

The economic activity results of the Republic of Armenia in the period of January - December, 2005 reaffirmed the tendency of the economic growth stability that took place in recent years. The production of gross domestic product (GDP) first exceeded two billions and made 2228.0 billion AMD providing the growth by 13.9% in comparison with 2004. The GDP index-deflator for the specified period decreased by 2.9 percentage points and made 103.1%. In 2005 the per capita volume of GDP made 1513 US dollars. The fact that during 2001-2005 the average annual growth of GDP production made 12.1% versus 5.1% in 1996-2000 confirmed the tendency of stable economic development.

Armenia's steady economic progress has earned it increasing support from international institutions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), as well as other international financial institutions and foreign countries have extended considerable grants and loans, which have given the Republic a strong hand in improving its infrastructure and economic atmosphere.

In fact, Armenia's GDP, which has experienced double-digit growth for the past 5 years (13,9% in 2005) and is expected to repeat this exploit in 2006, is one of the fastest-growing in the world. The government has also controlled inflation (only 0.6% in 2005) and substantially reduced its rates of poverty (from well over 55% in 1996 to 39% in 2004) and severe poverty (from 27.7% in 1996 to 7.2% in 2004). This impressive economic recovery has earned the country top marks from international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Armenia ratified the basic conventions and agreements of the international system, and has joined important international organizations such as: the United Nations, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It has also established diplomatic relationships with 94 countries and has become an active member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the political alliance of former-Soviet countries).

The enlargement of the European Union on 1 May 2004 has brought a historical shift for the Union in political, geographic and economic terms, further reinforcing the political and economic interdependence between the EU and Armenia. Armenia has welcomed the EU's enlargement in May 2004 and its inclusion in June 2004 in the European Neighborhood Policy. It maintains a strong relationship with France due to the significant Armenian Diaspora there and has important commercial links with Greece. It offers the opportunity for the EU and Armenia to develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond co-operation, to involve a significant measure of economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation. The European Union and Armenia are determined to make use of this occasion to enhance their relations and to promote stability, security and welfare. The approach is founded on partnership, joint ownership and differentiation.

European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner said: "I believe that our Neighbourhood Policy is bringing real

benefits to Armenia and today we are offering to the country even more attractive incentives. It will bring the Policy into sharper focus, concentrating on key areas of mutual interest like people to people contacts, deepening trade relations, stronger co operation on energy migration and visa issues as well as financial support. Important contributions will be a new Neighbourhood Investment Fund. The Neighbourhood Policy has made a positive start, but the EU can do much more. We must rise to the challenge of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity of our neighbours. There is no better way of doing this than by supporting their political and economic reforms.”

The EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Armenia, of the other part, was signed on 22 April 1996 and entered into force 1 July 1999 entered into force in 1999, with the goal of promoting respect for democracy, rule of law and human rights, as well as market economy reforms, trade liberalization and cooperation in a wide number of sectors. The Parties intend to agree on an EU-Armenia Action Plan, which will support the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement through the elaboration and agreement of concrete steps towards attainment of its objectives.

On May 20, 2006 the Coordinating Committee headed by the President of the RA was established (the President Decree N 114-N) to coordinate the activities of state authorities with the EU institutions.

EU / ARMENIA ACTION PLAN was adopted in November 2006. This Action Plan is a first step in this process. The EU Armenia Action Plan is a political document laying out the strategic objectives of the cooperation between Armenia and the EU. It covers a timeframe of five years. Its implementation will help fulfill the provisions in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), build ties in new areas, and will encourage and support Armenia’s objective of further integration into European economic and social structures. Within the frameworks of the European Neighborhood Policy the implementation of the Action Plan will significantly advance the approximation of Armenia’s legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union. In this context, it will build solid foundations for further economic integration based on the adoption and implementation of economic and trade-related rules and regulations with the potential to enhance trade investments and growth. It will furthermore help to devise and implement policies and measures to promote economic growth and social cohesion, to reduce poverty and to protect the environment, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of the sustainable development.

Armenia officially became the 145th member of the World Trade Organization, WTO on February 5, 2003, further solidifying its position among the free markets of the world

Armenia has been a beneficiary of European Commission (EC) External Assistance programs since 1991 amounts to more than €380 million. Humanitarian assistance (notably ECHO and Food Aid Operations through the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund, EAGGF) has accounted for nearly €120 million and has contributed to alleviating the very severe humanitarian situation in the mid-1990s.

With the approval of the Country Strategy Paper in December 2001, TACIS assistance to Armenia in the period 2002-2006 is focusing on continued support for institutional, legal and administrative reform as well as on support in addressing the social consequences of transition. TACIS is providing essential assistance to the implementation of Armenia's Poverty Reduction Strategy approved in 2003. The 2002-2003 Action Program (€10 million) is currently being implemented. The 2004-2005 Action Program (also €10 million) has recently been agreed.

The Food Security Program (FSP) has provided significant budgetary support to key agricultural and social sectors in Armenia and has thus played an important role in tackling poverty in Armenia, notably through its support for family allowances and child care. The combination of budget support and technical assistance through FSP (with complementary TACIS technical assistance) has also enabled significant reforms to be made in the field of land reform and public finance management. Implementation of FSP has been very successful and further such support is envisaged for 2005-2006 (€21 million) notably to assist Armenia in continuing to implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In December 1998, Armenia settled the remaining amount of its debt to the Community. The country subsequently benefited from a new Macro Financial Assistance package of a €28 million loan and a total grant of €30 million to be disbursed over the period 1999-2005, subject to macro-economic performance and structural reforms. In the context of the IMF supported economic program, this assistance has contributed to the sustainability of Armenia's external debt.

The EC European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Program launched its activities in support of NGOs in Armenia in 2003 with the objective of promoting and protecting human rights and democratization as well as conflict prevention and resolution.

The EU is providing policy advice supporting economic, political and social reform and development through the Armenian European Policy and Legal Advice Centre (AEPLAC). A very successful food security program (€100 million over 10 years) is currently in progress. It is designed to support the government's poverty reduction efforts by providing budgetary support and technical assistance for key land and agricultural reform, public finance management and social sector reform.

In 2007, €21 million in Community assistance has been allocated for Armenia. An indicative amount of €98.4 million has been allocated for the period 2007-10, under the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument

However all these documents are gender-blind since no measures to promote women's rights, gender equality or human rights standards are proposed or acknowledged through impact assessments or any other measures in them. Meanwhile the European Union as a global economic and political player should implement obligations to mainstream gender in all programs and projects taken at the international conferences and signed in documents (Beijing Platform of Action, Cairo Program of Action, Monterrey Consensus Document, and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) etc.). In general, Armenia has demonstrated a strong commitment towards the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, despite some initial delays caused by Parliamentary elections in May 2007 and internal issues. However women's rights and gender equality mostly are not reflected in the national development plan.

Will Armenia become an open, socially orientated and humanistic society depends to a considerable degree, on the further evolution of the women's movement and on women's civic attitude, participation and activism in the democratic processes of the emerging civil society.

The proposed research paper continues monitoring of women's economic, social and political situation in Armenia, gender analysis of current EU development programs, gender perspective in planned EU Development Policy and the Financial Perspective 2007 – 2013, gives recommendations to EU Commissions, Parliament and EU Member States on inclusion of a gender perspective in development policies of the EU.

Part 1. Political, legal and socio-economical conditions regarding women's policies

Women's rights in the legislation

Women's equal rights have had a long history in Armenia: Armenian ancient codes and legal regulations provide indirect evidence of the fact that in that time women were treated as equal members of society in issues of heritage, property and so on. For instances the code of Shahapivan (443 B.C.), provides "women a right to possess a family property in case the husband deserted his wife without any reason. It was mentioned also that a wife had right to bring a new husband home". The famous public figure, writer philosopher of 18th century Armenian Shahamir Shahamirian state:

"Each human individual, whether Armenian or of another ethnicity, whether male or female, born in Armenia or moved to Armenia from other countries, will live in equality and will be free in all their occupations. No one will have the right to lord over another person, whereas their manual labor shall be remunerated according to any other work, as required by the Armenian Law". (Pitfalls of glory, Article 3)

It is worth to mention that, the First Armenian Republic of 1918-1920 was one of the first nations to give women the right to vote and to be elected and in its Parliament eight percent of the members were women. It is worth to emphasize that, the first female –ambassador was Dr. Diana Abgar (Abgaryan) Ambassador of Armenia in Japan (While Alexandra Kollontai recognized to be the first female ambassador was appointed as Ambassador of Norway only in 1923).

The Independent Armenia continued the Soviet Constitution traditions and according to the constitution and legislation of Independent Armenia, women and men in Armenia enjoy equal rights in State life, in political life, in work and in family. Legislative norms in Armenia mostly correspond to the major international standards. The fundamental human rights and freedoms in Armenia are safeguarded by the national Constitution (1995) in the chapter, 'Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Individual and Citizen' (articles 14 - 42) which served as a basis for national legislation and stipulated the equality of men and women. While the Constitution does not directly refer to gender equality, the principle is ensured by numerous laws. Participation of citizens in establishment of democracy and decision making are the most fundamental human rights.

Article 27 of the Constitution addresses the electoral rights of citizens, which are also safeguarded by a 1991 law, 'On National Referenda in the Republic of Armenia'. Men and women have equal right to participate in elections at all levels, to elect and be elected.

The law, 'On Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia' corresponds to international norms and says that the marriage of a citizen of Armenia to a citizen of a different country, does not entail a change of citizenship, and the change of citizenship of one spouse does not automatically result in such a change to that of the other spouse (Article 6).

However, lack of corresponding mechanisms to ensure proper implementation of this legislation produces discrimination of women in all spheres, including political participation. In real life, women are left out of economic and political processes, resume traditional roles in society, and experience most strongly the effects of a hazardous, thoughtless transition from a totalitarian society (with a centrally planned and rigid economy) to a free market economy-based democracy.

Thus, in this transition period, in Armenia there is a contradiction – there is a legislative arena, which protects women's rights and their economic and social rights in particular, but there is no mechanism for its realization and implementation

State bodies established for gender equality and equality policy

In Armenia there is no state body for gender equality and equality policy. At present, women's issues are dealt with by the Department for Women's and Children's Issues created within the Republic of Armenia Social Welfare Ministry in 1997, as well as the Mother and Child Health Protection Division of the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Health. In 1997, the Prime Minister issued a decree on creating a Committee to carry out the 1998-2000 Gender Policy Development Program.

In the framework of Beijing Action Plan implementation enactments "On main provisions of the program on women's state improvement empowering women) in Republic of Armenia"(N 242 dated April,15, 2004) and "On approving the national program on women's state improvement and increasing their role in the society in 1998-2000 in Republic of Armenia"(N406 from June, 26, 1998) were elaborated. They were directed to gender policy development in the Republic. Thus, in 1998 the first National Action Plan was approved namely "1998-2000 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society". It was a three-year program designed to improve the status of women. Despite some points of the enactments were implemented (the gender expertise of RA legislation accomplished, investigations conducted and recommendations on struggle with violence against women, increasing participation of women in decision making processes, statistical data gathering disaggregated on gender basis was launched, information brochures publication) on the whole the program remained unaccomplished. The reasons were not only in lack of funding but also in lack of coordination of different agencies activities coordination, as well as in absence of strict mechanisms of implementation. Besides the low level of the population awareness created problems.

In 2000, the Women's Council was created under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, which is a voluntary consultative body, which was rather formal and had no impact on gender policy and/or women's movement.

In 2002 the Committee (lead by the vice Minister of Social Welfare) on development of the National Program on women's empowering and increasing their role in the society in the Republic of Armenia was established on the base of the

government of RA decision N 550 from September 25, 2002. The Committee was lead by the vice Minister of Social Welfare.

It is worth to mention, that in 2002, a Deputy Minister was appointed in the Ministry of Social Security to coordinate activities aimed at addressing women's issues. However, all of these bodies tackle social, health-related, and employment concerns, and do not have sufficient resources and powers to either develop or carry out an effective policy to overcome women's issues and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The most important achievement was the approval of the "2004-2010 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society". (Decree number N 645 - N dated 8 of April 2004 Of the Government of the Republic of Armenia)

The Action Plan defines the principles, priorities, and key targets of the public policy that is pursued to address women's issues in the Republic of Armenia. It is based on the relevant provisions of the Republic of Armenia Constitution and is targeted at the fulfillment of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, the recommendations of the Fourth Beijing Conference (1995), the documents of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Equality between Women and Men, the UN Millennium Declaration requirements, and commitments of the Republic of Armenia under other international instruments.

The Action Plan comprises 8 sections:

- Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in decision-making and in the social and political spheres;
- Improving the Social and Economic Condition of Women;
- Education Sector;
- Improving the Health Condition of Women;
- Eliminating Violence against Women;
- Role of the Mass Media and Cultural Institutions in Reporting on Women's Issues and Building a Female Portray Model; and
- Institutional Reforms.

Each section is made up of the following parts: Situation Analysis, an overview of Challenges, Strategies, and Measures to address the issues. The implementation of the Action Plan will be pursued in close cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations. .

Neither parliamentary groups nor gender advisers – in an official governmental bodies as well as national regulations concerning gender exist in Armenia

The worst thing is that as researchers of public opinion have shown that over fifteen years after the collapse of the Socialist system, attitudes of the society to gender equality and feminism have not changed significantly. Armenian women's activists prefer to be feminist without calling themselves feminist to avoid negative connotations.

Analyzing development of the national machinery for gender mainstreaming we can mark both positive and negative tendencies. The evident achievements are strong legislative base that guarantees anti-discriminative gender approach; two Action Plans was adopted in 1998 (1998-2000) and in 2004 (2004-2010) and Deputy

Minister was appointed in the Ministry of Social Security to coordinate activities aimed at addressing women's issues.

The negative tendencies are 1) that institutional mechanisms' status, mandate and activity are dependant on changes in Armenian government; 2) the national machinery on gender equality still concentrates its efforts on mothers' protection and women's employment; 3) "improving of women's status" still remains the main framework for gender equality policy; 4) lack of financial and human resources. That is why the institutional mechanisms do not correspond with the contemporary goals – they do not fulfil political role to be catalyser of gender mainstreaming in governmental administrative system in the whole.¹

It is worth to mention, that the roots of constant ignoring gender issues in Armenia can be traced in declared equality, inherited from the Soviet System. However it has become clear that soviet solving of women's question contained elements of gender discrimination, since Lenin and the communists became detached to real socialists theory and used women liberation as tool to make women a cheap work force serving also for propaganda of the communist system.² After downfall of Soviet Union in Armenia even no attempts are made change the situation since the Woman Question is considered to be solved and gender equality assumed existing in Armenia from Soviet time.

Gender mainstreaming, gender equality concept still has not full political recognition as one of the main goals for government activity. Male dominated power structures complicate gender mainstreaming in governmental policy. The government is lack of understanding of gender equality in the context of democratization, human rights and European integration

Women in decision making

“Women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account”

Beijing Platform for Action, 1995

Women in Armenia, who form more than half of the population and voters, have little influence either on their destiny, or on the future of the country of Armenia. They are badly underrepresented in the political arena and their involvement has diminished even in the past 10 years. The under-representation and insufficient participation of women in all decision-making, and particularly in the political sector, results in governance and policies that fail to acknowledge the plight and interests of women

According to the constitution and legislation, women and men in Armenia enjoy equal rights in State life, in political life, in work and in family. Legislative norms in Armenia mostly correspond to the major international standards.

An important milestone in that respect was the UN *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* which provided a detailed treatment of

¹ Institutional mechanisms to empower women: results since Beijing conference. UN Economic and Social Council Secretariat note. Geneva, 2000. P. 2.

² Svetlana Aslanyan, *Gender equality from above: Women's right as Human Rights in Armenia*, “Women and Politics”, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 2000,99

the concepts of discrimination and of its forms and of the measures for its elimination. The Convention was adopted in 1993.

Armenia was one of the 191 countries that signed the Millennium Declaration. Respect for and commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women is recognized as one of the Millennium Development Goals.

Transition from the Soviet mandate to the Armenian national mandate resulted in steady diminution even of the soviet formal woman's role as a leader and in negation of even symbolic equality of soviet system³

It is worth to mention that in different periods of Armenian history women actively participated in the national liberation movement, in the struggle for independence, in the diffusion of educational ideas and in the development of national unity. But in the newest era of our country, after playing an essential role in the struggle of independence in 1988-90⁴ and being in the vanguard of a general national movement, women were not needed in the process of creating an independent country. Instead, our democrats took the secondary role of "servants" and not the role of leaders, who make decisions.

We can state, that for our county this is regression even from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

Now in independent Armenia, the ability of women to influence political processes has diminished even since 1991. The number of women in the executive and legislative branches of government declined dramatically. According to Lyudmila Harutiunian, who leads a small party called Arzhanapatvutyun (Dignity), winning an election or securing a high-level government post is extremely difficult for local women in Armenia because politics have long been monopolized by wealthy businessmen and other powerful men reliant on brute force, and there is little the women can do about that.

However, the only women's political organization in Armenia, which was artificially created by the minister of Internal Affairs, the Women's Party "Shamiram" in 1995. It collapsed following the 1998 elections due to changes of the government and the president

Despite women make 51.8% of RA population and 60% of women have higher education and they make 35% of PhD and Doctors, women in Armenia are not sufficiently involved in decision making, they are not represented on the higher appointed state positions

Thus the potential 51.8% of RA population remains unclaimed.

³ The participation of women in political life became the basic postulate of communist ideology. In order to implement that ideology, a fixed number of places (*quota*) were picked out for women in legislative and executive bodies. For example, under the communist regime in Armenia, the quota of women in Parliament was 36%. However, this seemingly wide political participation of women during the Soviet times represents a wrong picture in terms of women's actual participation, since women were not included in the decision-making bodies process and were not included in the highest structures of the country. For example, in the Politburo only once was one women over almost 75 years of its existence.

⁴ The first strikes and demonstrations in the History of Soviet Union started in Armenia on the Opera Square, called the Square of Liberty now and women were in the front line of the struggle, lying in front of Soviet tanks and fighting against Russian soldiers. It was unbelievable action with the respect to KGB fear.

Gender asymmetry is visible in a political realm: the women in the power are represented as follows:

The women's representation in the National Assembly (Parliament) of Republic of Armenia

Supreme Soviet of USSR-36%
1991- 9 women (3, 6%)
1995- 11 women (6, 3%)
1999- 4 women (3, 1%)
2003- 6 women (5, 3%)
2007-12 women (9, 2%)

We can see, that in 1995 the number of women in Parliament significantly increased, it resulted from the establishment of Women's Party "Shamiram, members of which entered to the Parliament under protection the minister of Internal Affairs

An increase is observed also in 2007 because of the amendment to Armenia's Electoral Code mandated that at least 15% of all political party candidates running for seats in the nation's parliament had to be women.

Unfortunately, the participation of women in the last local government elections has decreased. In 12 communities of Yerevan not a single woman community head has been nominated, in two communities of Yerevan no woman put forward her candidacy even for Avagani (Council of Respected Citizens) member and in 5 communities no woman was elected. In Yerevan 10 women (5.5%) were elected Avagani members out of 43(6.3%) nominated. In 12 cities of Republic of Armenia no woman was elected Avagani member and 9 cities only a woman. In total, in the Republic of Armenia 13 women were elected community heads out of 929(1.4%), and 211 Avagani member out of 45000(4.7%).

Women's participation in executive bodies has the following figure: only one ministrel posit is held by a woman out of 18 Ministries and Departments(5.6%), 6 women Deputy Ministers out of 56(10.7%). Only 13 women Community Heads were elected in local government (1.4%), and 211 Avagani (Council of respected members of community) (4.7%). There are no women mayor or vice mayor. The situation is better in judicial system. Women form 18% of judges, and approximately one third (34%) of lawyers.

At the same time women make: 54% of government staff, 44% of ministries' staff, 38% marzpetarn's(local self government body in regions) staff, 33% of staff of local self government bodies, 45% of staff of village governance bodies.. The cited figures provide evidence that women still continue work on subordinate positions as it was in Soviet time. The examination shows that in general women have a high level of participation in governmental middle circles and in the procedure of preparing documents, and very low level in political decision-making

The survey of ten printed leading newspapers on articles about women showed media had not supported the creation of a positive image of a woman. The publications in mass media do not inspire trust towards women candidates.

Meanwhile the change of attitude of mass media also will also contribute to the development of the present political situation

Our research⁵ revealed that now, in transition, the main ideological and political obstacles stand in the way of political involvement of women are:

- Traditional and culture stereotypes, predetermined social roles for men and women
- Predominance of “man model” in the political life and in electoral government bodies
- An image by women about politics as a men job and “dirty” game
- Very limited financial support for women candidates, limited access to a political network,
- Absence of contacts and collaboration with other social organizations including women’s and human rights NGOs
- Absence of self-confidence of women while nominating candidates
- Absence of an adequate educational system and trainings for women-members of political parties, leaders of NGOs, community activists and in particular for the orientation of young women toward political life.

In 2006 the Country-Wide Survey/ Opinion Poll on Public Perception on Public Services/MDGs at local level was initiated by UNDP. The Survey demonstrated that public opinion with respect to women rights prescribes positive trends to individual women’s efforts while negative tendencies to traditional style of society life. On the whole the public opinion reflects lack of capability for all sides to incorporate women’s rights in real life. The state attempts to improve the situation have had no significant results.

However, there are some positive changes including twofold increasing of the number of women in National Assembly (in 2003- 6 women, in 2007-12 women). Currently one of vice speakers is a woman and one of head parliamentary commissions is also a women. Two women hold the post of Ambassador. There are few women in governmental delegations on peace negotiations and they have a low level of participation in diplomatic corpus.

Social and economic situation of women

The downfall of the Soviet Union, the sharp decline of the financial condition of women, the absolute alienation from social and political life, and the loss of any social protection. The condition of women changed for the worse and continues to worsen: difficulties in the transition period (mainly of social and economic character) have especially impacted women; they have become the most vulnerable part of the society. Closing of almost all factories as a consequence of economic links breakage among former soviet republics reflected on the state of all workers irrespective the age and sex. Some kinds of industries including textile, food and radio electronic productions where hundred thousand women had been employed

⁵ Svetlana Aslanyan, *Women and Empowerment: from socialism to transition*, "Feminist Conversations: Women, Trauma and Empowerment in Transitional Societies," University Press of America, 2008

totally vanished. Only men remained employed on a few industrial units, that survived. The same occurred with the dismantling of kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

Although existing Armenian legislation declares women's equal rights, *de-facto* women are not enjoying equally their economic and social rights. Women face harsh realities of life in male-dominated and not benevolently disposed towards them society. In 2004 Armenia was classified as country with the transitional economy meanwhile Armenia is among industrially developed countries with high level of education and got status of country with market economy

The establishment of a private property framework is an essential priority for Armenia, and the National Assembly adopted numerous laws to this effect. For example, the laws 'On Private Property in The Republic of Armenia' (1993), 'On Privatization of State and Public Residential Fund' (1993) and 'On Privatization of Public Property' (1997) ensure the principle of equal rights for men and women. Since the declaration of independence, Armenia has taken the path of democracy to establish itself as a democratic state. On becoming a member of the United Nations, Armenia acceded to numerous UN documents including, its ratification in 1993 of the 'Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women' (1979), the 'Convention on Equal Pay For Equal Work' (1951) and the 'Convention on the Citizenship of Married Women' (1957) amongst others.

However all these measures did not lead to significant changes. There is no juridical practice to protect women against gender discrimination at the labour market. The courts of Armenia have not examined such cases. The lack of cases, first of all, is connected with the lack of appeals from citizens for protection from gender discrimination. At least there is no data on publication of court decisions in the press; the official statistics on such cases does not exist.

Prior to downfall of the Soviet Union idealized the West, the capitalism, but today it is evident that market economy does not lead directly to social justice and gender equality. Women who form 51.8% of RA population, 60% of people with higher education and 35% of PhD and Doctors make 67% of Armenian unemployed population. Meanwhile it is well known that gender equality is an essential human right which is crucial for economic growth.

In Armenia gender asymmetry is particularly obvious in economic and social spheres. Thus, men account for 33% and women for 67% of the registered unemployed. Men account for 84%, while women for 16% of the officially registered entrepreneur. Women have become the most vulnerable part of the present population. They are forced out from social and political life. The slogan - "Women must be dismissed first", has become universal for all CIS countries. That means that unemployment has female face although most unemployed women have secondary education, some even PHD. It is worth to mention that the relationship between education and employment is the same as that in the case of men, since the social formation changed.

At the same time the average age of unemployed women is gradually decreasing; women at the 41 - 55 age group have less chance of finding a job.

Our research⁶ revealed terrible injustices during the privatization of land in 1991; the women's rights were violated in the process of privatization. We have encountered complaints from young women and girls that during the privatization of land in 1991, land was not registered to women (only in cases, when there were no men in the family or when the woman was the elder one in the family).

The next observation is that often, women are even exploited at their working places, the length of working day on private enterprises is not controlled, and they work in unlimited regime and in conditions, which are dangerous for their health. The situation affects particularly young women who are often forced to work for 12-14 hours daily (e.g. waitress), without any contracts and they can lose their working place in a minute without any lawful consequences for the employer.

In addition the research revealed very often women made 30% less money than men in all sectors of Armenia's economy.

The National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society (2004-2010) recently adopted by the government envisions "Improving the Social and Economic Condition of Women". Thus in Situation Analysis in Section 2 of the Plan revealed the following challenges:

- Low income of women
- Vast unemployment amongst women
- Social proneness of refugee women
- Limited business activity by women
- Inadequate participation of women in the process of social and economic development in rural areas
- Insufficient participation of women in the process of social and economic development in urban communities
- Underdevelopment of national arts and crafts that traditionally generated employment for women.
- Lack of knowledge and skills among women active in arts and science to be operated effectively in the newly-emerging economic system.
- Deterioration of the pre-school child care infrastructure

To overcome them the following strategies were devised:

- 2.1. Gearing social policies towards improving the economic status of women
- 2.2. Gearing social policies towards encouraging an increase in the birth rate
- 2.3. Settle the use of the labour force of women by facilitating a reduction in the number of unemployed women
- 2.4. Facilitating an expansion of business activities of women
- 2.5. Enhancing women's participation in the development of rural communities, and ensuring new jobs for women in rural areas.
- 2.6. Enhancing the knowledge and skills of women artists and scientists to operate efficiently under the new economic system
- 2.7. Developing national arts and crafts that traditionally generate employment for women

⁶ Svetlana Aslanyan, "Women's Social Rights in Transition", "Sustainable Feminisms: Enacting Theories, Envisioning Action", St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, 2003

Development of small and medium businesses in the country is still underway; there is a shortage of favorable conditions and a favorable environment for doing business. All of this by and large hinders the enhancement of economic opportunities for women. Back in 1997, research conducted by the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Industry and Trade demonstrated that women were 17.2% of all those doing business in Yerevan, and 3.1% of those doing business in the regions (the "Marzes"), and that there were far fewer women employed in the manufacturing sector here (1.9%), while the activities of female entrepreneurs were only in trade and services. Nowadays women are occupied in very hard low-paid jobs. It's "shuttle business", service and trade at the market, in the streets. Many of them go to work abroad.

Over the recent years, most of the credit programs targeted at the provision of economic assistance to women in Armenia have not had sufficiently favorable terms, and, therefore, do not facilitate the economic advancement of women. In some of the schemes, the lending interest rates are so high that women cannot develop their business and, in the best case, hardly cover the subsistence of the family.

Surveys conducted by the RoA Department of Migration and Refugees and the National Statistics Service in 2001 and 2002 have illustrated that about 15.2% of those who leave the country are labour migrants. The migration is driven by social-economic causes, the lack of any prospects to find professional employment, the low level of income, and the skepticism about the future. About 42% of them are women.

However, the financial and business activities of women are currently restricted mainly to retail trade and small business, especially in the service sector. The research showed that Armenian women still have psychological barriers and patriarchal stereotypes; mostly they have less access to credit and capital than men, they have less access to training programs related to technology, market information or other relevant skills, due to lack of money and time because of family responsibilities.

From the other hand the level of women's social protection to be very low. The restructurings of social security schemes, reduction in the number of pre-school institutions, budget cuts in the public health sector and the increasing proportion of payable medical services have a negative impact on women.

But there is some positive change; another segment of the women's population, when given a real chance for freedom and participation, becomes more active. They use the opportunities of market economy for increasing the economic situation of their families.

On the ground of an army of unemployed a new strata of women emerged, most of all such women are in medium and small size business or they are managers different level in various offices of foreign firms and international organizations, Among 1100 privat firms and organizations, declared about themselves in "Spyur" (Business information guide) the leaders of 91 are women which is the evidence of significant changes. Now women are heads foreign firms representative offices, stores and pharmacies, tourist agencies, consulting agencies, publishing houses and design centers, media(newspapers, magazines, radio), training centers, computers and programming, goods production, beauty and fashion salons, as well as private schools.

Family business occupies a special place, as a rule, in trade and service field, where it reveals that namely the wife suggest the best solutions, namely she manages to persuade partners and tax inspectors and achieve beneficial conditions, namely due her efforts the cycle of customers is formed. In other words the model where the husband is nominal head, while a woman is a real one.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP was adopted by the Armenian government in August 2003, which is based on a real GDP growth rate assumption of 6% over medium term. Due to its main focus on redistribution issues, the strategy addresses sustainability and the sources of future economic growth at a fairly general level. Substantial job creation in new small and medium sized businesses is a key for meeting the poverty reduction targets. At the same time, continued public sector modernization should provide better access to basic services for all. Total government expenditures as a percentage of GDP are actually on a declining trend (19% in 2003) as the revenue potential is not being realized, although the PRSP envisages a 14% per annum increase over the period 2004-2015.

The new Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Armenia for 2004-2008 was adopted by the World Bank by in June 2004. The Country Assistance Strategy was developed in close partnership with the Government of Armenia, and was based on the participatory developed Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The main priorities envisaged in the Country Assistance Strategy are:

- Promoting private sector led economic growth
- Making growth benefit the poor
- Reducing non-income poverty
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Improving the targeting of expenditures for social protection and education

Despite this document in gender blind the measures contemplated under the Country Assistance Strategy will be helpful in addressing social and economic problems of women, which will, in turn, facilitate in overcoming poverty in the frameworks of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

Nevertheless with respect to average income equality in 2004, women income comprised 69 % of men income. This is accounted for the fact that fewer women are involved in the high-income sectors and more women involvement in the social services where the income is low. According to PRSP projections the higher enrolment of women in the education system will continue during the period 2003-2015, but income difference will be mitigated due to increase of salaries for social sector.

The existing national pension system has different impact on women and men because pension is directly connected with incomes.

In Ukraine women retire on a pension five years early than men. Women are pensioned off in the period when they have advantageous conditions in terms of professional skills and career opportunities. To be pensioned off five years early, women have shorter seniority and lower position that determine lower pension. Taking into account that women in Ukraine live 13 longer than men, it means that elderly women are one of the vulnerable groups. The pension reform that should introduce accumulated pension still has not been implemented.

Part 2. Gender perspective in EU development aid

Current EU development programmes

Armenia has been a beneficiary of European Commission (EC) External Assistance programs since 1991. The EU assistance to Armenia in the period 1991-2006 was provided via a broad range of instruments, the most important being TACIS, Macro-financial Assistance (MFA), the Food Security Programme (FSP), EC Humanitarian Office (ECHO), European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Armenia, of the other part, were signed on 22 April 1996.

In 1995 the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was initialed. The plenipotentiaries of: the Kingdom of Belgium, the kingdom of Denmark, the federal republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the French Republic, Ireland, the Italian republic, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the kingdom of the Netherlands, the republic of Austria, the Portuguese republic, the republic of Finland, the kingdom of Sweden, the united Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The cooperation programs between the Republic of Armenia and Federal Republic of Germany started in 1993 being, at first, only technical cooperation programs. Financial cooperation programs have been implemented since 1995, and after intergovernmental negotiations in 2001 within the framework of “Caucasian Initiative” regional programs are also been implemented. German Technical Cooperation Company (GTZ) implements technical cooperation programs

The EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the goal of promoting respect for democracy, rule of law and human rights, as well as market economy reforms, trade liberalization and cooperation in a wide number of sectors entered into force 1 July 1999. It covers a timeframe of five years.

The main objectives of the PCA are:

- to provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of political relations; to support the efforts of the Republic of Armenia to consolidate its democracy, to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy;
- to strengthen the rule of law, including the legal reforms;
to promote trade, investments and harmonious economic relations between the Parties,
- to contribute to protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property;
to provide a basis for legislative, economic, social, financial, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation.

The PCA includes all fields of cooperation except military cooperation. Within the framework of the PCA the following bodies have been established:

The RA-EU Cooperation Council, (the Armenian co-chairman is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RA)

The RA-EU Cooperation Committee (the Armenian co-chairman is the Minister of Trade and Economic Development of the RA)

The RA-EU Subcommittee on Trade, Economic and Legal Issues, (the Armenian co-chairman is the Deputy Minister of Trade and Economic Development of the RA).

In 2003, Armenia's relations with Western European countries diversified, the agendas were broader and the extent of political contacts was expanded. Several important interstate and intergovernmental agreements were signed with the governments of Germany, the Swiss Confederation, Republic of Italy and Kingdom of Denmark, France and Italy. During the last year, Armenia's relations with Central and Eastern European states also moved forward.

In the framework of development aid, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs arranged an IT seminar for Armenian state officials in October 2001 in co-operation with the Ministry of Transport and Communications. In June 2002, a seminar introducing Estonian health care and health insurance system reforms was organized in co-operation with Ministry.

In 2003 the EU created a new framework for its relations with neighbours, including Armenia, called the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

In June 2004, Armenia (together with Azerbaijan and Georgia) was included in the European Neighborhood Policy, at its request and following a recommendation made by the European Commission.

The inclusion of Armenia in the ENP resulted in a new level of relations between the RA and the EU. Armenia acquired the status of an EU neighbor country. The Commission was invited to report on progress made by each country with regard to political and economic reforms. Today, the Commission provides an assessment of bilateral relations between the EU and Armenia, reflecting progress under the existing Partnership and Cooperation

Agreement and describing the current situation in areas of particular interest for the ENP partnership: the development of political institutions based on the values – democracy, the rule of law, human rights – enshrined in the Agreement; regional stability and co-operation in justice and home affairs; and economic and social reforms that will create new opportunities for development and modernization, for further liberalization of trade and for gradual participation in the Internal Market.

In the framework of the ENP two fundamental documents have been designed to shape EU – Armenia relations: EU- Armenia Action Plan and ENPI Armenia Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for 2007-2013.

EU-Armenia Action Plan was adopted and signed on November 14, 2006. This Action Plan is a first step in this process. The EU Armenia Action Plan is a political document laying out the strategic objectives of the cooperation between Armenia and the EU. It covers a timeframe of five years. The Action Plan implementation is aimed to help fulfil the provisions in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), and encouraged and supported Armenia's objective of further integration into European economic and social structures. Implementation of the Action Plan should significantly advance the approximation of Armenian legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union.

The Plan sets objectives and priorities in most big policy areas - e.g. in legislation, economic and social policies, trade policies, environmental standards, taxation, transport, energy, education and public health sector - and elaborates on what should be done to achieve them. The EU has promised to increase financial support to Armenia to help with the implementation of the action plan with the

Key objectives for the Action Plan should include:

- Strengthening the rule of law, of democratic structures and pluralism (e.g. the reform of electoral legislation in line with Council of Europe (CoE) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) recommendations and the holding of democratic elections; constitutional reform taking into account CoE recommendations; reform of local self-government);
- Strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially regarding freedom of expression and freedom of assembly;
- Improvements in the business climate as well as public sector modernization
- Further efforts to tackle corruption and fraud reform of tax and customs administrations and legislation

The Action plan was directed to development assistance. It sets out a comprehensive set of priorities in areas within and beyond the scope of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Among these priorities, all of which are important, particular attention should be given to the following areas and specific actions:

Priority area 1:

Strengthening of democratic structures, of the rule of law, including reform of the judiciary and combat of fraud and corruption

Priority area 2:

Strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in compliance with international commitments of Armenia (PCA, CoE, OSCE, UN);

Priority area 3:

Encourage further economic development, enhance poverty reduction efforts and social cohesion, thereby contributing to the long term objective of sustainable development, including the protection of the environment;

Priority area 4:

Further improvement of investment climate and strengthening of private sector-led growth

Priority area 5:

Further convergence of economic legislation and administrative practices

Priority area 6:

Development of an energy strategy, including an early decommissioning of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant (MNPP)

Priority area 7:

Contribute to a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;

Priority area 8:

Enhanced efforts in the field of regional cooperation

The Action plan divided into six main chapters:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. NEW PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVES
3. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

4. GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

5. MONITORING

The chapter n 4 General objectives and actions are divided into following seven sub-chapters

- 4.1 Political dialogue and reform
- 4.2 Contribute to a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
- 4.3 Economic and social reform, poverty reduction and sustainable development
- 4.4 Trade-related issues, market and regulatory reform
- 4.5 Cooperation in the Field of Justice, Freedom and Security
- 4.6 Cooperation in specific sectors, including transport, energy, environment
- 4.7 People-to people contacts

The gender equality issue has been incorporated into following paragraphs

4.1. Political dialogue and reform. Democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedom. Strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. Continue efforts to ensure the equality of men and women in society and economic life by implementing the adopted “National Plan for Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in Society”;

4.5.3 Fight against organized crime, trafficking in human beings, drugs and money laundering

Strengthen efforts and co-operation in the fight against organized crime

Reinforce the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children, (as well as activities to integrate the victims of such trafficking) and smuggling of illegal migrants

Implementation of the Action Plan will significantly advance the approximation of Armenia’s legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union. In this context, it will build solid foundations for further economic integration based on the adoption and implementation of economic and trade-related rules and regulations with the potential to enhance trade, investment and growth. It will furthermore help to devise and implement policies and measures to promote economic growth and social cohesion, to reduce poverty and to protect the environment, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of sustainable development

The European Neighbourhood Policy Instruments (ENPI) has been operational since 1 January 2007. The ENPI replaces the co-operation programmes TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) in this light, the ENPI appears as the strategic continuity with enlarged objectives of the former TACIS programme. The main purpose is to create an area of shared values, stability and prosperity, enhanced co-operation and deeper economic and regional integration by covering a wide range of co-operation areas.

The Parties intend to agree on an EU-Armenia Action Plan, which will support the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement through the elaboration and agreement of concrete steps towards attainment of its objectives. In 2007, €21 million in Community assistance has been allocated for Armenia.

An indicative amount of €98.4 million has been allocated for the period 2007-10, under the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument.

The EU-Armenia Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Armenia covers the period 2007-2013. Assistance to Armenia over that period will principally be provided under the new European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which is being established to provide assistance for the development of an area of prosperity and good neighborliness involving the European Union and the partner countries covered by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)¹.

The principal objective of EU-Armenia cooperation at this stage is to develop an increasingly close relationship between the EU and Armenia, going beyond past levels of cooperation to a deepening of political cooperation and accompanied by continued economic growth and continued results in poverty reduction. EC assistance over the period covered by this strategy will help to achieve the above policy objectives.

Under the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2007-2013 this translates into priority support for three strategic categories:

- Strengthening of democratic structures and good governance;
- Further support to regulatory reform and administrative capacity building;
- Support for poverty reduction efforts

The new Strategy Paper for Armenia has been developed in close consultation with the Armenian authorities and fully reflects national priorities. Member States, other donors and civil society organizations have been consulted during the drafting process

In Armenia Country Strategy Paper EC assistance priorities are presented under the same seven chapters:

- Political dialogue and reform
- Cooperation for the settlement of the conflict over Nagorno -Karabagh
- Economic and social reform and development
- Trade, market and regulatory reform
- Cooperation in justice, freedom and security
- Transport, energy, information society and environment
- People-to-people contacts

Gender is planned to be mainstreamed into the design of programs related to all the key issues mentioned above as a cross-cutting issue to the maximum extent possible. At the same time, unfortunately, the description of each of three priorities is gender blind and does not take into account gender dimension of social and economic development.

Armenia has been a beneficiary of European Commission (EC) External Assistance programs since 1991. The EU assistance to Armenia in the period 1991-2006 was provided via a broad range of instruments, the most important being TACIS, Macro-financial Assistance (MFA), the Food Security Program (FSP), the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and humanitarian assistance provided by ECHO.

Assistance to Armenia

Priority Area 1: Strengthening of Democratic Structures and Good Governance

- Sub-priority 1: Rule of law and reform of the judiciary
- Sub-priority 2: Public administration reform, including local self government / public finance management / public internal financial control and external audit / fight against corruption
- Sub-priority 3: Human rights, fundamental freedoms, civil society, people-to-people contacts

Priority Area 2: Support for Regulatory Reform and Administrative Capacity Building

- Sub-priority 1: Approximation of legislation, rules and standards (mainly based on
- National Programme for PCA implementation and reflecting the ENP Action Plan priorities)
- Sub-priority 2: Sector-specific regulatory aspects, including administrative capacity building

Priority Area 3: Support for Poverty Reduction Efforts

- Sub-priority 1: Education
- Sub-priority 2: Regional development and social services

In 2007, €21 million in Community assistance has been allocated for Armenia. An indicative amount of €98.4 million has been allocated for the period 2007-10, under the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument. This overall allocation may be increased through allocations under a new “Governance Facility” which will reward those ENP countries which achieve the best performance in relation to governance issues. The indicative breakdown of resources should be as follows:

Priority area 1:

Support for Strengthening of Democratic Structures and Good Governance-29,52 m €

Priority area 2:

Support for Regulatory Reform and Administrative Capacity Building-29, 52 m €

Priority area 3: Support for Poverty Reduction Efforts -39,36 m €

Some examples of how the EU supports reforms in Armenia

In the period 2007-2010 under ENPI the European Commission will grant Armenia approximately 100 million Euros and 75% of that amount will be allocated as direct budgetary support. This can be considered as significant progress in Armenia-EU cooperation since the country obtains overall independence in terms of financial resource management.

Budgetary support instrument has the following advantages:

- Increases the partner country’s ownership over the development process,
- Contributes to the partner country’s sustainable economic growth and creates relevant preconditions for it,
- Assists donors to focus on large-scale national programs,
- Contributes to the strengthening of beneficiary country’s administrative capacities,
- Reduces operational costs of assistance management hence does not require the establishment of program management office,
- Contributes to the transparency of state budget and increase internal and external supervision,
- Increase the effectiveness of provided assistance, and etc.

The release of fixed installment is expected in May 2008 and accordingly the release of variable installments will be made during financial years 2008 and 2009. In June 2004, the World Bank adopted its new Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Armenia for 2004-2008. The CAS was developed in close partnership with the Government of Armenia, and was based on the participatory developed Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The main priorities envisaged in the CAS are:

- Promoting private sector led economic growth
- Making growth benefit the poor
- Reducing non-income poverty
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Improving the targeting of expenditures for social protection and education

Regional development projects (together with the Council of Europe) and EIDHR projects are supporting democratic reform.

Work is under way to support nuclear safety measures in order to keep up sufficient safety standards for the country's outdated nuclear power plant (Medzamor). Over a number of years the EU supported the development of a comprehensive energy strategy for Armenia to strengthen its energy security and develop alternative energy supplies.

A number of projects are focusing on education, especially in the field of vocational training which is one of the priority areas in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The EU is providing policy advice supporting economic, political and social reform and development through the Armenian European Policy and Legal Advice Centre (AEPLAC). A very successful food security programme (€100 million over 10 years) is currently ongoing to support the government's poverty reduction efforts by providing budgetary support and technical assistance for key land and agricultural reform, public finance management and social sector reform.

On higher education, reform continued in line with Bologna Process principles with the support of the Tempus programme, which has been the main driving force behind the modernization of curricula and improvements to the administrative and organizational structures of universities. Student mobility to the EU increased (by 60% in 2007) through participation in Erasmus Mundus.

In the area of youth, Armenia registered an increase (over 20%) in participation rates in the relevant actions of the Youth in Action programme as compared to 2006. Armenian young people and youth workers were involved, for instance, in a large scale project on conflict management involving other partners from the Southern Caucasus countries as well as from EU Member States.

OECD, The Overseas Economic Corporation Fund, Japan: has decided to provide a loan of up to 5,399 million yen to fund "Electricity Transmission and Distribution Project" in the Republic of Armenia, and signed the loan agreement on February 18, 1999. Based on the recent activities carried out by the JICA in both Armenia and the region, a strong focus was placed on the collaboration in the field of

agriculture and the assistance available from the Japanese government in the form of machinery and fertilizers, which are badly needed in Armenia, as evidenced by the growing number of bidders at the auction sales. This kind of assistance was said to be continued on the Japanese side.

EU Member States development aid

From the **EU-25**, France, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands and UK provide assistance to Armenia⁷.

France focuses on support to university education, culture and health care.

Denmark promotes local self –governance, judicial reform and rule of law, vocational training, infrastructure development such as rehabilitation of water systems and electricity transmission.

Sweden promotes local self-governance, judicial reform and rule of law, vocational training, SME development, and promotion of mortgage lending. It gives as well support to a project on rural development.

Ireland supports the health care sector by upgrading hospital technical infrastructure. It also fights trafficking in people and contributes to reconstruction of a child care centres.

NL's key areas of cooperation are macro support, human rights and good governance.

UK promotes regional development and public sector reform. It also assists with improving public expenditure planning mechanisms.

Other donors including IFIs

OSCE is active in fighting corruption, in anti-trafficking, democratization, electoral reform, environment, human rights, media, human rights and rule of law.

EBRD is intensifying efforts to improve the country's investment climate. Together with the IMF and World Bank, the EBRD is active in restructuring the energy sector, further strengthening the financial sector and providing support for SMEs. Armenia is part of EBRD's 'Early Transition Countries' initiative. Launched in April 2004, the initiative aims to increase investments in the Bank's seven poorest countries. Through 2005, the EBRD completed 8 investments in Armenia, totalling EUR 116m.

The **World Bank (WB)** runs many programmes in Armenia, including structural adjustment

credits (a 5th SAC started in 2003, focusing on social reforms and business climate) and sectoral credits (energy, transport, water, education...) which are also linked to the PCA. In 2006 fiscal year World Bank commitments to the country had reached US \$ 398,6 m (118, 6 m for 2006, plus 280 m ongoing projects). The World Bank's last Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) approved by the Bank in June 2004 focused on making growth more pro-poor and reducing poverty resulting from lack of income. The real focus is on reduction of inequalities. World Bank Poverty Reduction Support Credits (PRSCs) are intended to support policy and institutional reforms in the furtherance of the official Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSCs focus on four critical reform themes: (i) consolidating macroeconomic discipline and strengthening of governance; (ii) sharpening competition and entrenching property rights; (iii) mitigating social and environmental risks, and (iv) modernising the rural economy. The first PRSC is proposed to be extended on the basis of policy and institutional reform actions taken as agreed with the International Development Agency. Subsequent PRSCs shall be made available as the agreed triggers of policy. The credit shall help to sustain economic growth and poverty

⁷ ENPI Armenia Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013. Annex 4. P.27.

reduction by advancing high priority reforms identified in the PRSP and by providing resources for the budget, if institutional reforms are satisfied. The strategy envisages a lending programme of between US\$ 150 million and US\$ 164 million. Both the IMF and the World Bank have provided continuous support to Armenia with concessional funds and large-scale technical assistance.

IMF just completed the second review under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement for Armenia and released a further SDR 3.28 million (about 4.9 mln US\$) under the arrangement. This brings the total amount drawn under the arrangement to SDR 9.84 million (about 14.7 m US\$).

UNDP provides assistance in many sectors related to economic development, information technologies and decentralisation. It particularly assists the ministry of Trade and Economic Development in elaborating a 20-year Economic Development Plan.

MCC: Armenia has reached an agreement in 2006 for support under the “Millennium Challenge Account. The funding foresees 238 m \$ over 5 years, for irrigation and rural roads.

The first year will start with a planned allocation of 12, 6 m \$.

Other development programmes and sources of development aid

USAID provides technical and financial assistance to some key sectors (customs reforms). It is involved in a Commercial Law and Economic Regulation Program, has a WTO programme addressing subcomponents such as technical regulations (for WTO compliance), trade policy training, standards (to replace GOST standards), trade related intellectual property measures (TRIPs). USAID is also supporting a long term project to assist the State Commission on Protection of Economic Competition. In 2005 Armenia has received USAID funding of 65 Mio \$.

Development Aid for Armenia in 1999-2005

1. Japan's ODA Disbursements to Armenia

(Net disbursements, \$ million)

Year	Loan Aid	Grant Aid	Technical Cooperation	Total
1999	—	1.84	1.60	3.44
2000	—	8.09	1.06	9.14
2001	1.10	2.94	1.14	5.18
2002	0.36	9.37	1.63	11.36
2003	—	5.29	1.72	7.02
2004	—	1.24	3.44	4.68
2005	0.05	1.57	3.75	5.37
Total	1.51	39.09	15.53	56.13

2. Amount of DAC Countries' and International Organizations' ODA Disbursements to Armenia

DAC Countries, ODA Net (Net disbursements, \$ million)

Year	1		2		3		4		5		Japan	Total
1998	U.S. A.	35.2	Netherlands	8.3	Japan	5.5	Germany	5.1	Greece	4.0	5.5	66.9
1999	U.S. A.	47.9	Germany	6.9	Netherlands	5.2	Japan	3.4	Norway	2.4	3.4	75.3
2000	U.S. A.	103.1	Japan	9.1	Germany	8.9	Netherlands	4.7	Greece	3.3	9.1	139.3
2001	U.S. A.	78.0	Germany	16.8	Netherlands	7.9	Japan	5.2	France	4.1	5.2	124.2
2002	U.S. A.	114.3	Germany	19.9	Japan	11.4	Netherlands	7.2	France	3.8	11.4	171.4
2003	U.S. A.	74.2	Germany	13.9	Netherlands	9.9	Japan	7.0	Norway	3.4	7.0	127.4
2004	U.S. A.	73.1	Germany	18.7	Netherlands	9.2	U.K.	6.6	Japan	4.7	4.7	133.9

Source : OECD/DAC

NGO's and development aid

According to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia there are currently close to 4000 registered civil society organizations (NGOs) in Armenia; by estimation approximately 15% of these organizations can be considered fully active and effective to some extent of their activities. According to the survey results nearly one half of all NGO respondents are involved in developing and implementing of educational and/or training program activity. Nearly 40% of CSOs collect and disseminate information, while one third of NGOs provide humanitarian or social assistance, and very small groups are lobbying the interests of specific social groups or provide legal defence. In recent years the number of NGOs providing humanitarian assistance significantly decreased.

The foreign donors have promoted and supported the development of NGO in Armenia. However, there have been some negative developments in the NGO field. Firstly, some authorities and ruling political parties in the country have started to create their own NGOs in order to secure funding and have "pocket" NGOs for political purposes and to launder money. Secondly, as a consequence of limited funding and severe competition, the majority of NGOs hunting for funds apply to grants that are actually often irrelevant to their overall mission. Thus, NGOs were sometimes perceived as promoters for the agenda of international organizations, rather than those of the country.

According the focus group⁸, conducted in the frame of the project “CIVICUS Civil Society Index in Armenia” in 6 out of 10 regions of Armenia within the project CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Armenia, rating the structure of sources and their share in financing of CSO were the following:

		Financial resources							
	Part of budget	State	Business	Private Donors	Membership fees	Paid services	Foreign donors	Total	In average
1	< 10 %	1.3	6.5	13.0	31.2	6.5	1.3	59.2	27.1
2	11+20	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	-	-	20.8	9.5
3	21-30	-	1.3	2.6	-	-	2.6	6.5	3.0
4	31-40	-	-	3.9	1.3	-	1.3	6.5	3.0
5	41-50	2.6	2.6	2.6	1.3	3.9	6.5	19.5	9.0
6	51-60	3.9	-	-	-	-	3.9	7.8	3.6
7	61-70	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	1.3	0.6
8	71-80	1.3	-	2.6	1.3	-	14.3	19.5	9.0
9	81-90	1.3	1.3	1.3	-	-	14.3	18.2	8.3
10	91-100	-	-	5.2	-	5.2	48.1	58.5	26.8
	Total	16.9	16.9	36.4	40.3	15.6	92.3	218.4	100

The obtained estimates are eloquent, the dominant part of funding comes to foreign donors, and moreover the size of their funding makes 70-100 % of expenses. It is more evident from counting the sources.

However, the government is now currently allocating some of its budget to financing of NGO projects. Local authorities and municipalities have been following suit as well. The present system makes the funding of CSOs by the private sector difficult, since special permission of the government is required for each case. In Armenia there are no tax laws favourable to CSOs. Particularly, Armenian authorities uniquely interpreted financial-legal provisions in a manner unfavourable to CSOs, which in other countries would be interpreted to allow a tax exemption for charitable donations. Thus, there is a lack of tax exemptions for donations to CSOs in Armenia.

Thus one of the most challenges facing Armenian civil society has been acquiring funding to sustain their activities. Indeed, although there has been support from foreign donors, there is a major fear that foreign donors will eventually withdraw their support. However about 4/5 of CSOs in Armenia have a chronic shortage of financial resources.

Based on the findings of this project, 42% of CSO funding comes from international organizations and resource centers. Indeed, the amount of international funding exceeds donations by local sponsors. Until recently the government had confined its

⁸ Svetlana Aslanyan, Aharon Adibekian, Nelli Ajabyan, CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Armenia, intermediate Report on focus groups and national advisory group, Yerevan, 2005-p10

support and funding to Parliamentary Parties (according to the number of seats they hold), public TV broadcast stations, national radio stations and a number of private media companies. However, the government is now currently allocating some of its budget to financing of NGO projects. Local authorities and municipalities have been following suit as well. The present system makes the funding of CSOs by the private sector difficult, since special permission of the government is required for each case. About 4/5 of CSOs in Armenia have a chronic shortage of financial resources.

Well-intentioned foreign donors have also promoted and supported the development of NGOs/POs in Armenia. However, there have been some negative developments in the NGO/PO field. Firstly, some authorities and ruling political parties in the country have started to create their own NGOs in order to secure funding and have "pocket" NGOs/POs for political purposes and to launder money. Secondly, as a consequence of limited funding and severe competition, the majority of NGO/POs hunting for funds apply to grants that are actually often irrelevant to their overall mission. Thus, NGO/POs were sometimes perceived as promoters for the agenda of international organizations, rather than those of the country.

One of the most challenges facing Armenian civil society has been acquiring funding to sustain their activities. Indeed, although there has been support from foreign donors, there is a major fear that foreign donors will eventually withdraw their support

At first glance the RA legal field seems favorable for CSOs and other institutions of civil society. Many laws were adopted and are currently in force, which deal with and regulate CSO activities. However, thorough investigation has revealed that many issues of CSO activities and their relations with other organizations are open and lacked in the field of legal regulations.

Nevertheless some legal mechanisms that empower CSOs as civil society institutions to realize their rights endorsed by the law are open. Relations between CSOs and the government, CSOs and parliament, and CSOs and LGBs (local self-government bodies) are unclear. There are no provisions either in CSOs, as well as in the relations of other civil society organizations, which make the civil society institutional sphere uncontrollable

Civic code (010.0268.241201) was adopted in December 2001. The goal of this law is to assist the creation and activity of CSOs as ruled by the Law on Legal Entities which develop activities. The law refers in detail to the order of state registration of organizations. It specifies the organization's president, board, monitoring committee, members' rights, responsibilities and obligations. The law also states which demands an organization's charter must satisfy. Some amendments and modifications were made in the law (12.14.2004 and 04.09.2007), but these had no significant impact on the law's content.

In the countries with the developed civil society, CSOs participate in decision-making directly through a system of access to government information, discussion of draft documents, public consultations etc.

While in Armenia, as a country in transition, weakness of civil society institutions is observed, this prevents CSO from becoming effective contributors to the policy process and advocates of more transparency and accountability of the government.

Thus, on one hand CSOs have sufficient institutional capacity to influence the government through policy analysis and policy recommendations; on the other hand

the government does not sufficiently value the CSO and is not ready yet for collaboration.

The research conducted within CIVICUS Civil Society Index project⁹ (CSI) showed, that CSOs have a weak impact on public policy, on society at large and on the well-being of citizens. The Impact dimension is where Armenian civil society shows the least development thus far. A key obstacle to a more sustained policy impact, which became apparent in the 2004 assessment, is the lack of advocacy and lobbying skills among professional CSO staff. In general, civil society is not yet able to influence public policy in Armenia. Civil society, including the public at large, does sometimes react to decisions of government that are contrary to their interests, primarily in evaluating problems, developing ideas for solution and then taking action but such action is quite limited and only in reaction to very significant issues. The lack of public trust in CSOs is another key obstacle to achieving a stronger civil society, although CSOs do enjoy higher levels of public trust than most other institutions in Armenia. However, in the context of widespread mistrust in society, CSOs are not found to be sources of social capital for their members.

However, mainly with assistance from international organizations, small modest steps have been made with the State although the private sector remains quite inaccessible. Some major societal interests and needs have been addressed by CSOs but lacks significant impact so far¹⁰. The CSI assessment results proved that in general civil society in Armenia made significant progress, however it has to implement further steps to reach the benchmark where it can significantly influence the key social issues.

Assumptions

In 2005, the Council of the European Union, EU Member States, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy adopted joint statement, known as the European Consensus on Development (ECD). In this Consensus all parties reaffirmed that “the primary and overarching objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”

As known, the eight MDGs are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce the mortality rate of children; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

The European Consensus on Development states that MDG agenda includes many development activities from democratic governance to political, economic and social reforms, conflict prevention, social justice, promoting human rights and equitable access to public services, education, culture, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as set out in the ICPD Cairo Agenda, the environment and sustainable management of natural resources, pro-poor economic growth, trade and development, migration and development, food security, children’s rights, gender equality and promoting social cohesion and decent work.

⁹ Svetlana Aslanyan, Aharon Adibekian, Nelli Ajabyan, CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Armenia (CIVIL SOCIETY IN ARMENIA: FROM A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO A REALITY) an assessment of Armenian civil society (2005 – 2006) p78

¹⁰Ibid p 86

In the European Consensus on Development the promotion of gender equality and women's rights is considered to be a fundamental human right and a question of social justice, as well as being instrumental in achieving all the MDGs and in implementing the Beijing platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Therefore the EU promised to include a strong gender component in all its policies and practices in its relations with developing countries.

Thus in September 27, 2007 European Parliament adopted the resolution on equality between women and men in the European Union¹¹. The resolution is linked and supportive to the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 that has been developed by the European Commission. It highlights the link between the demographic situation in Europe, the way it is perceived and approached and the issue of gender equality. The European parliament is also concerned about the lack of any improvements in the recent years as regards pay gap and sustaining discrimination on the labour market. The resolution urges the European Commission to develop a series of specific measures including awareness raising campaigns to further promote gender equality. There is also a huge emphasis put on the importance of facilitating the reconciliation of professional and family life. Resolution highlights globalization and needs of socially excluded women.

The EU-Armenia Action Plan and EU-Armenia Country Strategy Paper do not address directly to MDGs. It was mentioned that *gender equality* that is the goal 3 of MDGs is incorporated in the EU-Armenia Action.

The progress is already observed toward achieving MDGs in Armenia. Armenia remains on target to achieve most, if not all, of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The most important achievement was the approval of the “2004-2010 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society”, which already started. The World Bank estimates that Armenia is likely to meet the Millennium Development Goals for gender and education, may meet the goals for poverty reduction, infectious diseases and environmental sustainability, but is unlikely to meet those on child mortality and maternal health.

Reaching MDG 3 in Armenia is quite realistic, but it requires a strong political commitment. Establishment of quotas for the participation of women in party election list would ensure that by 2015 at least twenty-five percent of seats in Parliament will be held by women. It would be extremely difficult to ensure increased political participation of women at the community level, since there are no mechanisms for direct influence. However a general increase of the political participation of women would also contribute to their successful participation in community elections.

Among other strategic objectives the EU-Armenia CSP emphasizes that EU development policy is driven by the overriding objective of *poverty reduction* with the complementary aims of promoting good governance and respect for human rights.

In Armenia there is no research on efficiency, quality and transparency of ODA from gender perspective and it is difficult to assess the quality of assistance. There are no reports of ODA published or in Internet it is difficult to speak about the transparency. It was very difficult gathering the data, because no accounts are put in

¹¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/>

the official sites, annual reports are not published. The data was not gender disaggregated.

In general I have no difficulty with the meetings with officials, but they are not ready for cooperation. Either they don't have information or avoided opening it to public.

When December 24, 2007 in Yerevan the CDCS organized Training-Seminar "Official Development Assistance as an Instrument for EU Neighborhood Policy" for leaders and representatives of twenty one women's NGO I realized that practically nobody have idea about ODA. The same situation was with some officials.

Part 3. Cooperation with the development bodies (appr. 10 pages)

Cooperation with EC Delegation/Gender Focal Point

Ms.Monica Papyan, Project Manager of Neighbourhood Programmes of Delegation of the European Commission to Armenia has been nominated as a Gender Focal Point (GFP) in the Delegation of the European Commission to Armenia in 2007. The main functions of the gender focal point in the Delegation are following:

- Ensuring that women and gender issues are correctly taken into account in strategy design and programming for overall Unit's activities.
- Gender sensitisation of the calls for proposals/programming documents/project ToRs
- Reviewing of project proposals

Gender Focal Point cooperates with various organizations and invites them for consultations and meetings in accordance with the specificity of their mandate and the sector they are specialized in.

Cooperation with EC Directorate-General representatives

The EC Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has the task of contributing to the development of a modern, innovative and sustainable European Social Model with more and better jobs in an inclusive society based on equal opportunities.

It plays a key role in promoting positive interaction between economic, social and employment policies, bringing in the main players who can help to achieve the EU strategic objective, viz. to make Europe the world most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Within the Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities Directorate-General (DG), two Units deal with Gender Equality issues: the "Equality between Women and Men" Unit and the "Equality, Action against Discrimination: Legal Questions" Unit.

- The Unit dealing with "**Equality between Women and Men**" coordinates gender mainstreaming and assists other services of the Commission to gender mainstream their policies. This means integrating the gender equality objective into all Community policies.
- The Unit dealing with "**Equality, Action against Discrimination: Legal Questions**" ensures the effective transposition and implementation of Community legislation and initiates new legislative proposals if necessary.

Awareness rising is an important aspect of the effective implementation of gender equality legislation.

Within the Commission's **External Relations Directorate General** (DG RELEX), there is a Deputy Director General, Hugues Mingarelli, responsible for relations with Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean, as well as the development and implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Cooperation with National Government

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, PCA includes all fields of cooperation except military cooperation.

Within the framework of the PCA the following bodies have been established:

The RA-EU Cooperation Council, (the Armenian co-chairman is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RA)

The RA-EU Cooperation Committee. (the Armenian co-chairman is the Minister of Trade and Economic Development of the RA); The RA-EU Subcommittee on Trade, Economic and Legal Issues, (the Armenian co-chairman is the Deputy Minister of Trade and Economic Development of the RA).

On May 20, 2006 the Coordinating Committee headed by the President of the RA was established (the President Decree N 114-N) to coordinate the activities of state authorities with the EU institutions.

In February 2005 the RA officially applied to the EU for granting to Armenia a market economy status. The package of appropriate documents was presented to the EU. Currently, according to the EU procedures, this issue is under consideration. On May 1 2005 the RA Trade Representative to the EU (residence in Brussels) was appointed by the RA Prime Minister, thus underlining the willingness of Armenia to enhance trade and economic relations with the EU.

Development Cooperation: Armenia belongs to the WB category of lower middle income countries. General principles and EC policies regarding **development cooperation** therefore still apply. The Armenian government adopted an Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in August 2003 and approved a First National Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2001. Country-specific MDGs have been developed as well. Both lines for orientation have influenced the new external assistance strategy for Armenia considerably. It has therefore a strong focus on poverty reduction, in particular at regional and local community level and on education.

Trade: In the area of trade policy the EU is a key import and export market for Armenia which is currently benefiting from the General System of Preferences (GSP). Improving the system of certification and the control of rules of origin are important prerequisites in this regard. The Armenian government is actively working on these issues.

Transport: In the field of transport Armenia played an active part in the EU-Black Sea-

Caspian Basin Ministerial Conference in November 2004 in Baku and continues to play an active role in their follow-up Working Groups. Armenia also participates actively in the TRACECA Secretariat and TRACECA meetings and adopted the TRACECA strategy and the conclusions of Baku transport working groups during the Baku and TRACECA Ministerial conferences which took place back to back in May 2006 in Sofia. The EC has a strategic interest in providing support for areas identified as important in this context and for priority measures in line with the

recommendations of the High Level Group on the extension of the major trans-European transport axes towards neighbouring countries and regions. The Commission also adopted in March 2005 a Communication proposing the creation of a wider European Common Aviation Area including the neighbouring countries of the EU by 2010. It also includes the objective of Armenia joining this initiative in the medium term.

Environment: As regards environment protection, global and transboundary environment threats like climate change affect Armenia as well as the EU. Both parties are therefore committed to implementing the Kyoto Protocol and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Trans-boundary environmental threats include the use and protection of shared waters, in particular the Black Sea. Current EC support in this area is mostly provided on a regional basis. Follow-up measures could run under future assistance programmes.

Information Society: A comprehensive and transparent regulatory framework for the Armenian electronic communication sector is essential in order to promote investment. Approximation with the EU *acquis* will also facilitate trade in communication services. Regarding information technology, linking the Armenian National Research and Education Network (ARENA) to the European GEANT 2 and to the pan- European Grid infrastructure could give the Armenian research and education sector access to e-science resources in Europe

NGOs development platform

In the conference/training *Official Development Assistance / European Neighborhood Policy* (December 2007, Yerevan) the leaders/representatives from women's NGOs took part. Both women and men from all regions of Armenia took part. The training raised a big interest in development and gender issues among NGOs. The training showed that ODA/ENPI topic is new and not well known among Armenian NGO.

The program included three presentation and work in the working groups. The following presentations were made:

Svetlana Aslanyan, *Center for the Development of Civil Society* “CIS Gender Watch Project”

Karen Bekharyan, *European Integration* “European Integration and EU Neighborhood Policy”

Svetlana Aslanyan, *Center for the Development of Civil Society* “Official Development Assistance EU for Armenia”

Positive results of the conference/training:

- the conference / training raised awareness on ODA and ENPI among Armenian civil society;
- participants understood the role of civil society in monitoring of ODA;
- the network of women's NGOs, men's NGOs and human rights NGOs was built for future cooperation

Decision was made to continue the initiative and organize other awareness raising seminars.

Assumptions

The framework for civil society in Armenia is basically sound; however, the state dialog between state and CSOs is lacked. However from time to time particularly

before elections political parties, mostly ruling once seek collaboration with the CSOs, with hidden idea to attract votes in favor of them.

The state and local authorities should consider CSOs as partners in social services, such as health care and education. The participants agreed that state institutions should be more open and delegate some of the services to civil society organizations, who are better qualified, can apply more modern or innovative approaches, and enjoy more trust from society. Positive examples of such an approach are observed in democratic countries. This patterning for the provision of services will enhance CSOs ability to obtain resources from the private sector and private citizens, so as to also provide services that the state cannot or does not choose to provide.

To empower of civil society the government should provide supportive tax laws. The argument being that “charitable organizations” which contribute to the public good, should be tax-free; thus, they do not pay taxes on either revenues or purchases. A major stimulant to developing effective CSOs is an income tax deduction – so that no income tax is paid on the amount of money contributed to humanitarian or educational organizations.

Most of Ministries and Branches of executive power have established departments of public relations, but these departments mostly work with the mass media and focus mostly on presenting a positive image of the respective government institution using the press, but not on consulting civil society and involving it in decision making. Nevertheless getting information for NGOs is very difficult. The situation is worsened with the fact that the information is very restricted in the most ministries web –site, particularly one can’t find the reports

The civil society access to governmental information has become easier, although the information provided by government very often could be not complete or out of date, or has very formal character. The CSOs have power to organize public hearings and submit proposals, but the system of ensuring the responsibility of government to take civil society proposals into account is not in place.

Although the number of contacts of Armenian CSOs with the government increased, the level of civil society influence on governmental policy is still very low. The civil society still has not powerful mechanisms for governmental responsibility, accountability and for actual public participation in decision-making.

The cooperation with European Union structures as well as European Delegation in Armenia is still lacking clear and transparent mechanisms of interaction. The consultations with civil society have sporadic character. As a rule only organisations, which were funding by EC receive information on public consultations. There is also no mechanism to ensure civil society proposals are taken into account. The public access to information is limited by information located at the web-sites. To get additional information is very difficult.

Other observations

1.However, despite the fact that women’s NGO activities are underestimated in Armenia, that NGOs have implemented great work in the fields of education, research, advocacy, and charity, as well as important and useful work with women, children, refugees, the mentally disabled, and other disadvantaged groups. Armenian NGOs integrate great

intellectual potential. Our investigations showed that among NGO members almost all have higher education and many of them even have scientific degrees. This can be explained by the fact that many revealed unemployment after the downfall of the Soviet Union and moved to NGOs.

On the other hand despite the large numbers of registered women NGOs, there is no consolidated women's movement in Armenia.

2. Almost all the documents regarding ODA and other foreign assistance and development cooperation I studied were gender-blind, within these documents, no measures to promote women's rights, gender equality or human rights standards are proposed or acknowledged through impact assessments or any other measures. I studied a number of agreements made between Armenia and foreign countries. I have come to conclusion that all of them are also gender-blind, since they resulted from the above mentioned document. Finally, I would like to mention, that no case of words "gender" or "woman" was found in any documents regarding ODA from all I studied for this research. The only exception is Millennium Development Goals. I would emphasize also that on 10th of June, 2005 prime minister Mr. A. Margaryan stated that the priority fields for the ODA assistance – energy, transport, irrigation and water supply, agriculture, public health care, education – as singled out as far back as at the bilateral talks held in 1997, continued to be topical in part on the cooperation agenda seen against the background of the on-going social-economic reforms in Armenia, no words regarding gender issues had been mentioned.

Part 4. Recommendations for EU Commission, Parliament and EU Member States

1The EU development assistance should be based on gender aware policy and regulatory framework that addresses the distinct needs and concerns of women and men.

2. The EU Commission, Parliament and EU Member States should provide policy oriented on gender equality and more transparency with respect to ODA and other assistance as well as transparency regarding the government documentation, such as projects, reports, and agreements with other countries.

3.To make planned development cooperation and foreign assistance in Armenia gender sensitive I will recommend not only ask for priorities of Armenia , but also directly indicate gender issue as a priority and in all programs a special part "gender equality and women empowering".

3. To recommend Armenia to add in all programs of the power institute activities envision a special part "gender equality and women empowering";

4. To recommend Armenia to add in every point of the report be gender disaggregated, so that we can see how women benefit from development cooperation and foreign assistance. For example how many women benefit from training; how many women benefit from credit etc.

5. To recommend Armenia to add "Gender" in University Curricula, to open Gender Study Departments, affiliated to Universities.

6. I would suggest recommending Armenia to establish an official governmental bodies(Ministry/Committee/Department or?) on gender issues instead of transferring women's issues to the Ministry of Social Welfare, thus equating the gender issues with the socially vulnerable persons problem

7. I would suggest recommend Armenian ministries and local government to become more open to civil society
8. I would suggest recommending Armenia to devise the Strategy of Establishing Gender Equality in Armenia,
9. I would recommend donor organizations (since they play an important role in development of women's organizations and in civil society in Armenia): a) to change the policy from providing short term grants to NGOs to contributing the institutional development focused of this development long term grants seem to be more effective; b) to strictly coordinate different projects on gender problem; c) to assist NGOs to organize educational programs on gender problems for the representatives of all the branches of power, local government, NGO-s and mass media.

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About the Author

Svetlana Aslanyan received her Ph.D. in linguistics from the Institute of Linguistics of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. She is currently working as a Senior Scholar, head a research group and the Scientific Secretary on International Relations at the same Institute. She has published 68 documents, including 2 monographs, 6 dictionaries, and series of scholarly articles. Since 1996, after the Fourth Women Congress in Beijing Dr. Aslanyan has devoted herself to researching the role of women and the problems associated with the Women' NGOs and Women's Movement in Armenia. She prepared the course entitled "Introduction to

Gender: History, Culture and Society. The lectures were delivered and the reader "Gender: History, Culture and Society" was published.

Her current research is: Post Communist Armenia: A woman's Role in Establishing a Democratic Society. She has received IREX Fellowship and Fulbright Senior Fellowship for research projects in the USA. She is founding president of the Center for the Development of Civil Society and its Women Scholars' Council division; in her capacity as NGO President she has organized several training courses for vulnerable groups of women and youth, including refugees and national minorities. She has launched and achieved many initiatives to advance and raise the status of women in Armenia and to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for women and men in this period of reform and transition. She especially support initiatives directed at women and the self-empowerment of women in a growing democracy. Thus she is currently engaged both in theoretical research of women's movement and feminism and practical activity.

She was also served as a Short-Term Observer for the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations' International Observation Mission during the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Election.

Her current research is: Post Communist Armenia: A women's Role in Establishing a Democratic Society. It will result in a new book entitled: Women in Post Communist Armenia: Soviet Tradition, Democratic Transition and Future Dreams.