

## **National Assembly Stands for the Budgetary Increase of the Ombudsman Institution**

Today the RA National Assembly expressed its commitment to satisfy Ombudsman's application for increasing the Institution Budget for 2013. The anticipated budgetary increase is the successful example of a steady consistent effort and cooperation the Ombudsman Staff has been maintaining so far with RA state bodies, in particular, with the RA National Assembly. The increased capabilities of the Institution by the State –a requirement imposed on the State by the Paris Principles (Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions), will allow for gradual and progressive realization of the improvement of the Institution's operations and enhanced fulfillment of its mandate.

The additional funds will be allocated to ensure relatively adequate funding for the National Preventative Mechanism entrusted to the Ombudsman in accordance with the UN OPCAT. Nonetheless, the presumable allocation is a bare minimum required for regular monitoring of the detention places, whereas the Torture Prevention Expert Council, composed of civil society representatives, still lacks remuneration and hence, persists on working adjunct to Ombudsman NPM team on a volunteer basis. 11 million AMD (21 000 EUR) budget increase will guarantee regular visits to closed and semi-closed institutions and allow for instituting 4 specialized NPM positions, such as a social worker, a doctor and two lawyers.

Mandated/encouraged by UN OHCHR to protect and promote human rights defenders and civil society organizations Ombudsman Institution has furthermore adopted a new policy according to which it will in future refrain from receiving direct funding from development partners and will encourage the latter to consistently direct it to civil society organizations. The newly adopted policy will be beneficial for both Ombudsman Institution and partner human rights NGOs as will endorse the Institution with long-expected possibility to work with its partners without direct pecuniary matters – prerequisite inferred from the general context of the Paris Principles and related documents- and once again firmly underpin its commitment to promote civil society.

The mentioned developments will launch a new format of cooperation between Ombudsman staff and both civil society and international community considerably leveling up the partnerships. Henceforth the Institution will work with international partners in the format of mutual consultations and dialogue on human rights issues, solutions of large-scale systemic human rights setbacks, technical assistance and initiation of joint human rights programmes together with its partner NGOs.

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