

YOUNG LOCAL LEADERS: THE FUTURE FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Multi Rest House, Tsaghkadzor, Armenia

5 – 7 April 2016

Context

The seminar “*Young local leaders: the future for local democracy*” is organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe within the framework of the project “Support to consolidating local democracy in Armenia”, which is funded by the government of Denmark.

The aim of this seminar is to offer young local leaders of Armenia a platform for exchanging best practices in the field of local democracy, raising their awareness on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, its practical application in Armenia, as well as introducing principles of local governance.

Objectives

- To raise awareness on European principles of local democracy, in particular the key provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and how these principles may be applied in Armenia;
- To exchange experience with local elected representatives from other European countries and provide specific recommendations on how local authorities and civil society can unite their efforts for better responding to citizens' needs;
- To enhance skills on citizens participation and communication in the context of local political governance and decision-making processes, in particular to get involve further in public affairs and the community life, and with the view to engage in local elections;
- To improve the awareness of the participants on ethics in politics and decision-making and to discuss practical recommendations on how to counter corruption and unethical behaviour.

Contacts

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*The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation.
It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.
The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe,
responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states.*

*Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 648
elected officials representing more than 200 000 local and regional authorities*

<http://www.coe.int/t/congress>

Participants

27 young people including students, youth activists, NGO, political party representatives which did not have previous experience in participating in the trainings in local democracy.

Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia

Ashot GILOYAN, Head of Local Government Department (tbc)

Members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Emin YERITSYAN, Head of Armenian Delegation to Congress, Community Councilor of Parakar Community of Armenia, President of the Communities Association of Armenia

Majlinda BUFI, Mayor of Roskovec Municipality, Albania

Cathy BENNETT, Councillor, Monaghan County Council

National and international experts

National experts

Levon BARSEGHYAN, Councillor, Gyumri City Council, Board Chairman of Journalists' Club "Asparez" NGO, Editor-in-chief of "Asparez" daily

Varuzhan AVANESYAN, Local trainer, Lecturer of Art Management at Yerevan State University of Theater and Cinematography

Armine TUKHIKYAN, Program Director of Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development

International experts

Ljubov LISSINA, Member of the Trainers' Pool of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe; Secretary General of the NGO Trajectory@;

John LOUGHLIN, Member of the Group of Independent Experts to the European Charter of Local Self-Government

Young local leader in Ukraine

Oksana SHEVCHUK, Councillor of Fastiv, Kyiv Region, Ukraine

Council of Europe Office in Yerevan

Naira Avetisyan, Deputy Head of Office

Armen VAROSYAN, Senior Project Officer

Lusine ANANYAN, Project Assistant

Congress Secretariat, Council of Europe Headquarters

Marco MIRANDA, Project Coordinator, Cooperation Activities Unit

Programme

MONDAY, 4 APRIL 2016

Dinner and ice-breaker exercise (18.30– 20.00)

TUESDAY, 5 APRIL 2016

- 09.30 – 10.00** **Registration of participants**
- 10.00 – 10.30** **Moderation: Armen VAROSYAN**, Senior Project Officer,
Project 'Support to Consolidating Local Democracy in Armenia'
- Welcome speeches**
- Ashot GILOYAN**, Head of Local Government Department, Ministry of Territorial
Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia (tbc)
- Naira Avetisyan**, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan
- Emin YERITSYAN**, Head of Armenian Delegation to Congress, Community Councillor
of Parakar Community of Armenia, President of Communities Association of Armenia
- 10.30 – 11.15** **Mutual presentation of participants (social game)**
- Coffee Break (11.15-11.30)*
- 11.30 – 12.15** **Local democracy in Europe**
- John LOUGHLIN**, member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European
Charter of Local Self-Government of the Congress
- Presentation and discussion on the European standards for local and regional democracy,
the philosophy and main contents of the Charter, its Additional Protocol on the right to
participate in the affairs of a local authority and the Reference Framework for Regional
Democracy.*
- 12.15 – 13.00** **Local Democracy in Armenia**
- Emin YERITSYAN**, Head of Armenian Delegation to Congress, Community Councillor
of Parakar Community of Armenia, President of Communities Association of Armenia
- Introduction and discussion on the Local government system in Armenia, the role of the
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the implementation of
the Congress recommendations in Armenia - opportunities and challenges.*
- Lunch Break (13.00 – 14.00)*
- 14:00 – 15:30** **Local democracy: what is it about?**
- Work in groups: dilemmas on local democracy*
- Participants discuss the most important conditions to be fulfilled in order to be closer to
citizens, take their needs into account and be effective in a decision making as well as the
main features of a "good local politician".*

Coffee Break (15:30-15.45)

15.45 – 17.45 Local democracy: how to make a change?

Majlinda BUFI, Member of the Congress, Mayor of Roskovec Municipality, Albania

Cathy BENNETT, Member of the Congress, Councillor, Monaghan County Council

Levon BARSEGHYAN, Councillor, Gyumri City Council, Council Chairman of Journalists' Club "Asparez" NGO, Editor-in-chief of "Asparez" daily

Presentation on how the principles of the Charter are implemented in their countries / municipalities, current responsibilities, personal commitment, reasons to stand for elections, link to constituencies and contribution to the development of their cities, regions and countries.

Joint discussion with the contribution of all Congress members and experts

17.45 – 18.30 Social Game: Picture of Democracy

Dinner (19.00– 20.00)

WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL 2016

09.15 – 10.30 Trust and social capital: ingredients for a successful community and good governance

Work in groups

10.30 – 12.15 Citizen participation in local decision-making

Cathy BENNETT, Member of the Congress, Councillor, Monaghan County Council

Oksana SHEVCHUK, Councillor of Fastiv, Kyiv Region, Ukraine

Majlinda BUFI, Mayor of Roskovec, Member of the Congress

Sharing of experience on ways to enhancing citizen participation in local affairs; discussion on the role of civil society in this process.

Joint discussion with the contribution of all Congress members and experts

Lunch (12.15 – 13.15)

13.15 – 14.30

Deciding together

Work in groups: Simulation of a decision making process in a group.

14.30 – 17.00

Public Ethics: a common effort

Armine TUKHIKYAN, Expert, Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development

This session intends to make the participants reflect upon the values and standards linked to ethics in democracy, and in particular at the local level. Public ethics is not only about having proper rules and institutions, but changing the common set of values and behaviours. What does it entail for local elected representatives and citizens?

Joint discussion on best practices of ethics in local elected bodies with contribution of all Congress members and experts

Coffee Break (17.00 – 17.15)

17:15 – 18.30

Leaders: model of values and behaviours

Work in groups: dilemmas of personal values and how it is interlinked with public life, getting aware of the inner values that can motivate other citizens to engage in public affairs.

Dinner (19.00 – 20.00)

THURSDAY, 7 APRIL 2016

09:15 – 09:30

Warm up

09:30 – 11:00

Getting involved in local elections

Majlinda BUFI, Mayor of Roskovec, Member of the Congress

Levon BARSEGHYAN, Councillor, Gyumri City Council, Council Chairman of Journalists' Club "Asparez" NGO, Editor-in-chief of "Asparez" daily

Oksana SHEVCHUK, Councillor of Fastiv, Kyiv Region, Ukraine

Cathy BENNETT, Member of the Congress, Councillor, Monaghan County Council

Presentation of their experience in conducting their last electoral campaign, messages to transmit to citizens, flagship projects proposed and communication strategy adopted. How being elected influences the relations with citizens and civil society?

Joint discussion with the contribution of all Congress members and experts

Coffee break (11.00 – 11.15)

11:15 – 12:45 ***Public communication principles as a tool for campaigning and enhancing good governance***

This session presents the fundamentals of good communication techniques with a focus on campaigning; the link between good communication and transparent and accountable governance is explained

The benefits of building trust between the local communities and their elected representatives

Exercises and discussion

Lunch (12.45 – 13:45)

13:45 – 15:45 **Local democracy in practice: what can we do now?**

Work in groups: "Planning a series of feasible initiatives in order to strengthen local democracy in a municipality"

Evaluation criteria: a) feasibility; b) creativity; c) supposed effectiveness

15:45 – 17:00 **Conclusions, evaluation and lessons learnt**