

## YOUNG LOCAL LEADERS: THE FUTURE FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

**Yerevan, Armenia**

24-26 May 2016

(Ani Plaza Hotel)

### 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 raise awareness 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

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30 young people including students, youth activists, NGO's and political party representatives who already had previous experience in participating in such trainings on 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 the Armenian Delegation to the Congress, President of the Communities Association of Armenia

Nino ZURABISHVILI, Former Member of Gori Municipal Council, Georgia

### *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

Hayastan STEPANYAN, Legal expert on local government

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@

David MELUA, Member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Congress

### *Young local leader in Ukraine*

Mariia SOLOBUG, Youth Delegate to the Congress, Member of Board, NGO 'Step Forward'

### *Council of Europe Office in Yerevan*

Naira AVETISYAN, Deputy Head of Office, (tbc)

Armen VAROSYAN, Senior Project Officer

Lusine ANANYAN, Project Assistant

### *Congress Secretariat, Council of Europe Headquarters*

Karine MOREAU, Project Assistant, Co-operation Activities Unit

## Programme

**MONDAY, 23 MAY 2016**

*Dinner (18.30–20.00)*

**TUESDAY, 24 MAY 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)

**Emin YERITSYAN**, Head of the Armenian Delegation to the Congress, President of the Communities Association of Armenia

**Naira AVETISYAN**, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan (tbc)

**10.30 - 11.15**      **Mutual presentation of participants (social game)**

*Coffee Break (11.15-11.30)*

**11.30 – 12.15      Local democracy in Europe**

**David MELUA**, 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**

**Hayastan STEPANYAN**, Legal expert on local government

**Emin YERITSYAN**, Head of the Armenian Delegation to the Congress, President of the 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?**

### *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 to be a “good local politician”.*

*Coffee Break (15:30-15.45)*

**15.45 – 17.45**      **Local democracy: how to make a change?**  
**Nino ZURABISHVILI**, Former Member of Gori Municipal Council, Georgia  
**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, 25 MAY 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**  
**Nino ZURABISHVILI**, Former Member of Gori Municipal Council, Georgia  
**Mariia SOLOBUG**, Youth Delegate to the Congress, Member of Board, NGO 'Step Forward'  
*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  
**David MELUA**, member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Congress  
*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?*  
*Work in groups followed by joint discussion on best practices of ethics in local elected bodies with contribution of all Congress members and experts*  
*Coffee Break (15.30 – 15.45)*

**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, 26 MAY 2016**

**09:00 – 09:30**      **Warm up**

**09:30 – 11:00**      **Getting involved in local elections**

**Nino ZURABISHVILI**, Former Member of Gori Municipal Council, Georgia

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

*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**