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Results of EU-funded project on social rights of persons with disabilities in Armenia to be presented at international conference in Yerevan

**“Promoting the Social Rights of Persons with Disabilities
by Building the Capacities of Armenian Civil Society Organisations
to Engage with Council of Europe Monitoring Mechanisms”**

On 19 September 2018, at Best Western Hotel Yerevan, the Armenian Association for the Disabled "Pyunic" and the Advocacy Centre on Council of Europe Standards (France) will hold a concluding conference of the project "Promoting the Social Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Building the Capacities of Armenian Civil Society Organisations to Engage with Council of Europe Monitoring Mechanisms". The conference will present the key results achieved and products developed by the project and chart a course forward for furthering work on protecting and promoting the rights of Armenians with disabilities.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović will participate at the opening session of the conference and address the participants with a keynote speech.

Other keynote speakers will be Ms Mane Tandilyan, Minister of Labor and Social Issues, Mr Arman Tatoyan, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, H.E. Mr Piotr Antoni Świtalski, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Armenia, and Ms Loreta Vioiu, Deputy Head of the CoE Office in Yerevan.

Minister of Education and Science, Arayik Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister of Health, Sergey Khachatryan, as well as Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Zaruhi Batoyan, will also attend the conference. Certificates will be awarded to 60 Armenian lawyers and NGO workers that have successfully completed the online course on the rights of persons with disabilities. The course was developed by the project and was placed on the CoE Human Rights Education Programme for Legal Professionals' (HELP) platform at the following link: <http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/>.

“With new laws being adopted on the rights of persons with disabilities in Armenia, it was the right time to conduct this online training. We all need to have better understanding of relevant national and international laws to be able to use the opportunities that these laws offer us”, says Sipan Asatryan, a HELP course participant.

Representatives of mass media are welcome to participate in the event and to cover it in the news. The conference agenda also includes a workshop for media representatives on the topic “Mass media and the rights of persons with disabilities”. Journalists interested in attending the workshop and sharing their views, concerns and suggestions are

welcome to register by September 17, 2018 by sending a short message to Ruzanna Sargsyan, Project Manager at rsarg@mail.com.

Background on the project key outcomes

The **Armenian Association for the Disabled “Pyunic”** (Yerevan, Armenia), together with its international partner, the **Advocacy Centre on Council of Europe Standards** (ACCESS, Strasbourg, France), are announcing the conclusion of their joint activities, within the framework of the project “Promoting the Social Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Building the Capacities of Armenian Civil Society Organisations to Engage with Council of Europe Monitoring Mechanisms”. The project was launched in February 2017 and worked towards promoting the protection of social rights of persons with disabilities (PWD) living in Armenia.

Throughout the project, Pyunic and ACCESS NGOs build partnerships with more than 45 civil society organisations and disabled persons organisations (DPOs). Through a series of capacity building events in Yerevan and in other cities of Armenia these organisations have gained essential knowledge and understanding of the relevant European standards on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, including the **revised European Social Charter** (ESC(r)) and other legal instruments. All participating organisations were provided with online and offline training to complement this knowledge with practical monitoring skills in line with the Council of Europe's methodology.

Key project outcomes:

- **Two alternative reports** on the current situation of the rights of persons with disabilities and existing gaps in the implementation of the rights and provisions set by the European Social Charter and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The reports will be submitted to the CoE Human Rights Commissionaire and the European Committee of Social Rights before the end of 2018.
- An **analytical report** summarising the gaps in Armenia's legal and policy framework on the rights of persons with disabilities and providing relevant recommendations to the Armenian authorities (the full report can be found here: <http://pyunic.am/empost>).
- An **online course** on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Armenian and English versions of the course are available on the CoE HELP platform. The course is also accessible online to learners with disabilities in two adapted versions.
- **Two public awareness raising events** to change public perception of capabilities of persons with disabilities. In October 2017, a "Marathon on the Wheels" gathered a group of 100 participants traveling on wheelchairs, bicycles and feet through Yerevan to Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. The second awareness raising event will take a group of 50 people with or without disabilities to the top of Mountain Aragats on 21 September. "Disability is not a barrier to active lifestyle" is the key message of both events.
- **Handbook on the CoE standards** relevant to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. This publication will be available online in **Armenian and English** languages at <http://pyunic.am/em> and <https://accessrights.org/web> pages.

For more details about the project please visit: <http://pyunic.am/em>

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End.

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