



## A Snapshot of 2011

*New beginnings require sound wrap-ups and reflections that will underlie a roadmap into future. 2011 has been an eventful year for ICHD that crowned into recognition of its efforts and contributions internationally. ICHD has been included in the world's Top Thirty Transparency and Good Governance Think Tanks, according to the Global Go to Think Tanks Report, 2011 by the International Relations Program, University of Pennsylvania.*

*Some policies have remained in the limelight of ICHD activities in 2011. These priority areas were migration, Armenia's integration with the European community and Armenian-Turkish relations. Some other themes have emerged in accordance with the policy priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, for instance, demographic and gender policies.*

*Thus, we would like to share the highlights of our activities in 2011.*

## Project Highlights

### Migration:

#### *Strengthening evidence-based management of labour migration in Armenia*

This is one of the long-term projects ICHD started in December 15, 2010. The overall objective of the action is to enhance the management of labour migration flows from Armenia to EU countries through enhancing the capacities

The ICHD Quarterly Newsletter is published since Spring 2010. The Newsletter is intended to improve our communications with partners in civil society, government and development community in Armenia and abroad. We hope that the Newsletter will help you stay informed about our activities and gain a better understanding of who we are and what we do.

of the private employment agencies (PEA) to match labour demand and offer. To address this goal, in 2011 ICHD established the Umbrella Information Support System for Employment Services Unit (ULISSES), and developed an information portal which is currently being piloted. In addition, training was offered to PEAs to enhance their general understanding on labour migration within EU. Several off-the-record (OTR) discussions on migration issues helped develop policy briefs which offer concrete policy recommendations (see <http://ichd.org/?laid=1&com=module&module=menu&id=21>). The project will complete in December, 2013.

#### *Post-arrival assistance to Armenian returnees*

The project is a common effort between ICHD, the State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Department of Repatriation and Departure Service at the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands. The implementation started in June, 2010 and will continue till August, 2012. In 2011 the project team elaborated a booklet "Return: Not Necessarily a Step Backward" in Armenian, English and Russian, which aims to assist potential returnees from the Netherlands. Seven returnees directly benefited from the project, as upon their return the project team ensured health assistance and medical aid, helped with business start-ups and reintegration into the educational system of Armenia.

#### *Armenian-Turkish relations:*

#### *Support to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement (SATR)*

Armenian-Turkish rapprochement process officially stalled in 2010, when the ratification of the Protocols was put off from the agenda of the Turkish Parliament, while the Armenian Parliament insisted that no talks of ratification would



Workshop with private employment agencies on circular migration. September 2011. Yerevan.

be possible unless Turkey recalled any pre-conditions it had put forward. However, the stalemate in the official relations did not stop Track Two projects in progress, among which SATR, which started in October 2010, and has been implemented through a common effort of Project Consortium members: ICHD, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Yerevan Press Club and UMB(E)A.



Round table discussion on Armenia - Turkey rapprochement. December 2011. Yerevan.

For the last year the major outcomes of the project were two research publications “Taking the reins: Effects of an open Armenian - Turkish border and its significance on European Integration” and “Perspectives for Development of Transport and International Corridors in Armenia, Turkey and the Region”, available online at <http://www.ichd.org>. Another significant achievement was the formation of a functional professional network of Armenian and Turkish civil society organizations and business communities. These networks organized advocacy summits, expert discussions, videoconferences, exchange visits, round tables and four town hall meetings, each targeting a different aspect of the rapprochement process.



ICHD organizes a flashmob on sex selective births in Armenia during 16 days of activism against GBV. November 2011. Yerevan.

Finally, the project entailed a significant added-value by targeting women across the borders. Both Armenian and Turkish women participated in a round table discussion “The Role of Civil Society Institutions in Promoting Gender Equality and Combating Gender-based Violence in Armenia and Turkey” organized in Yerevan. The discussants revealed common challenges for women in both societies and identified the need for sharing best practices in addressing those. To raise awareness of the general public on some of the issues mentioned by the discussants on December 7 a flash mob was organized in Yerevan to protest against the skewed sex ratio of births in Armenia.

## European integration:

### International conferences

In November, 2011 ICHD organized two international conferences: “Eastern Partnership: National & European Dynamics” and “The Two Pillars of European Integration: Values and Practices”. The first, held on November 10-11, was the 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference on EU integration. It hosted a high-level international discussion on the Eastern Partnership, with a special focus on national and European dynamics. It was organised with the support of the EU Delegation to Armenia, the Mosaic Institute and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.



At the ICHD annual European Integration conference. November, 2011.

The conference brought together civil society actors and policy makers from Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Turkey, and Sweden. Representatives of the European Union, OSCE and the Council of Europe engaged in an open exchange of ideas and opinions with local and regional decision makers.

The conference started with opening speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Mr. Eduard Nalbandyan, the Minister of Justice Mr. Hrayr Tovmasyan and the Head



of the EU Delegation to Armenia H.E. Raul de Luzenberger. The conference also featured reports by Mr. Antti Hartikainen, Team Leader of the EU Advisory Group to Armenia, Mr. Douglas Wake, First Deputy Director, ODIHR and others. H.E. Tigran Sargsyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and Euronest Co-Chairman Mr. Kristian Vigenin delivered the closing comments.

The second conference was held in Yerevan on November 21-22. It focused on the role of civil society and think tanks in decision making in Armenia by providing an expert support to the government of Armenia for the implementation, monitoring and promotion of programmes such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP).

***Paving the road towards visa-free travel between the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU***

ICHD was an implementing partner of NO VISA, a program of the Policy Association for an Open Society (PASOS) and the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI) of the Open Society Foundations. The goal of the program was to promote closer integration and people-to-people exchange and contacts between the Eastern Partnership countries and EU member-states. This goal was to be achieved through securing enhanced co-operation leading to visa liberalisation. Towards this end the ICHD team developed the <http://novisa.am> website, which is part of the larger <http://novisa.eu>. In addition, it conducted and published a baseline study on visa liberalization and provided training to relevant state officials.



Workshop on visa facilitation. September, 2011

In addition, in September fifteen representatives of different Armenian NGOs participated in a training of trainers course, which was developed based on the Macedonian experience on visa liberalization. The training was conducted by Dr. Marija Risteska, Executive Director of Center for Research

and Policy Making (CRPM) and Dr. Zidas Daskalovski, Director of School of Public Policy “Mother Teresa”. It aimed at providing relevant knowledge and skills on visa facilitation and sharing the best practices from Macedonia.

***Wrapping up the activities of the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Centre (AEPLAC)***

2011 was the last year of AEPLAC activities, the list of which still remained substantial: awareness raising events and trainings on EU structures and policies for different audiences in all the regions of Armenia with the goal of increasing the visibility of the European integration.

**Other Policy Areas:**

***Social welfare***

ICHD facilitated a participatory discussion, based on the findings of the Survey on the Level of Social Cohesion in the Armenian Society. The participation of common citizens was ensured through three Town Hall Meetings (THMs) in Goris, Yerevan and Akhuryan. At a special presentation the report with the findings was shared with the interested stakeholders.



Town Hall meeting discussion in Yerevan. October 2011. Yerevan.

***Demography***

On October 19-21 ICHD and the UNFPA Armenia country office organized an international expert meeting in Yerevan. As the last year marked the 17th anniversary of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), UNFPA, national governments and development partners took stock of how much had been accomplished and how much more was left to do. The “7 Billion: Balance, Rights and Equity” expert meeting in Yerevan was part of a

major review process on the upcoming of the 20th anniversary of ICPD.

The aim of the technical meeting was to help identify gaps and challenges, consolidate lessons learned over the last years, and come up with practical recommendations for accelerating progress in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Fertility, migration, ageing and mortality have been identified as the most prevalent trends shaping the future demographics of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the experts shared expertise on each of the issues and made relevant recommendations to address the challenges in the mentioned regions.



World's top policy experts and academicians on population and development at the ICHD organized workshop "ICPD agenda in EECA region: 7 billion: Balance, Rights and Equity". October 2011. Yerevan.

Prior to the meeting, ICHD research team conducted a desk review in an attempt to identify the new trends in sexual and reproductive health, and reveal the challenges and responses that account for a rights-based approach in policy making. Based on the findings they presented and moderated a thematic session during the expert meeting.

## Conflict management and peacebuilding

### *Black Sea Peace Network (BSPN)*

As an active BSPN member, ICHD contributed to four meetings of the Armenian BSPN Council, and hosted five OTR meetings. The subsequent policy briefs – “The directives of integration of the Republic of Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic”, “European initiatives in the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict”, “Challenges of communicating European values and the process of Armenia’s EU integration”, and “The gaps in the negotiations around the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict” – can be found at <http://www.ichd.org>.

### *European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK)*

EPNK is a partnership of European NGOs, International Alert, Conciliation Resources, Crisis Management Initiative, Kvinna till Kvinna and the London Information Network on Conflicts and State Building. It implements initiatives that will contribute to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and in the process collaborates closely with the civil society organizations in the conflicting countries. ICHD is one of such organizations and it has worked closely with the Partnership since June 2010. Last year it conducted three training workshops for young leaders from Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

## Corruption

ICHD has been a pioneer in fighting corruption in Armenia. In 2011 it participated in a regional research project: “Civil society participation in policies to combat corruption in the Eastern Partnership countries”. The final publication of the report, both in Armenian and English, is available of the [Center’s website](#).

## Supporting institutional reforms:

ICHD worked in several different policy areas to assist institutional reforms, one being local self-government. ICHD, supported by Counterpart International, conducted local self-government institutional assessment in 41 partner communities in June, 2011. Next, within the USAID-funded project “Supporting the consolidation of comprehensive policies on decentralization and local self-government system in Armenia” ICHD conducted a Town Hall Meeting with over 200 representatives of the local self-governments from all over the country to find out about their attitudes to different models of decentralization and their comments and recommendations. A subsequent analytical paper was presented to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and served as a springboard for discussion on possible scenarios on decentralization in Armenia.

These initiatives were part of the USAID’s four-year civil society and local government project, the main objective of which is to increase the level of informed and organized civic activism at the local and national levels, along with more participatory, decentralized, efficient and accountable local governance that leads to a more democratic society. Various capacity building and technical assistance activities were started to support the development of long term capacity and financial sustainability of Armenian local government and civil society organizations as well as building bridges for mutual dialogue and initiatives. One of such activities was the project “Supporting policy, regulatory and institutional



reforms for the development of the civil society in Armenia”, which ICHD implemented from May to September, 2011. Within the project ICHD hosted four off-the-record discussions with subsequent policy briefs, invited an international expert who participated in expert discussion on regulatory mechanisms applied in various contexts in Europe and conducted needs assessment, the findings of which are available [online](#).

Finally, ICHD organized two OTRs on health and water management which focused on the improvement of accountability for public expenditures in these sectors. The subsequent policy briefs are based on the opinions passed by the participants and suggest concrete policy recommendations.

**Youth projects:**

ICHD has been an active member of *Euroforum*, a youth network established in Georgia in 2006. Today it involves NGOs and young people from the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), Belarus and EU member states (Spain, France, Poland and Germany). Financed mainly by the Youth in Action programme of the European Commission, the network brings together more than 150 participants across borders.



ICHD young affiliates at the you conference in Berlin. March 2011. Germany.

In December 2011 the young fellows at ICHD participated in the Euroforum annual meeting in Berlin. The network members participated in a debate on EU integration and culture, and identified the common challenges and specificities in each country. They shared core knowledge that each member organisation had developed over the years, in order to enhance the capacities of youth for more active and informed civic engagement.

The second Euroforum meeting took place in September in Madrid. The 24 participants, among which ICHD representatives, focused on gender issues and the role of social media

in youth activism.

The next youth project of significance where ICHD took part was the Youth Forum of the High Level Democracy Meeting of the Community of Democracies, organized by the [Young Leaders Forum](#) held in Vilnius on June 29-30. The Young Leaders Forum of the Community of Democracies was established in Vilnius during the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the Community of Democracies, on 23 June 2010. It is value-based organization that believes in global, intercultural communication, in experience sharing, lifelong learning, wise leadership, and activity continuity, as seeks to be a tool to prepare young global leaders to step into big politics and encourage democracy worldwide.

**Sharing best practice regionally:**

Since 2008 ICHD has been extensively sharing its best practices, especially in implementing effective public participation mechanisms, with partners in the South Caucasus and CIS countries. Within the framework of the project “Promoting public participation in the decision-making process through fostering a new tradition of democratic practices”, which was supported by the Black Sea Trust, ICHD transferred its knowledge and skills in public participation instruments to a Ukrainian partner: the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF). IRF staff visited Armenia in October, 2011 to participate in the Town Hall Meetings organized by ICHD and to learn of how it is facilitated. Later in November there was a reciprocal visit in Kiev, where the ICHD staff mentored their peers in scenario development, setting up a THM, facilitation and analysis of the THM results.

**Interning with ICHD:**

Last year, ICHD hosted ten interns from Armenia, the US, Germany and Belgium. During their internships they assisted the ICHD staff in organizing conferences and conducting research. Some of them carried out their own research



ICHD intern Simon Schmidt presents the results of the research. November 2011. Yerevan.

projects. For instance, Simon Schmidt from Germany analysed the [effects of an open Armenian - Turkish border and its significance on the European integration](#). Sarine Arslanyan from Belgium researched [the efficiency of the policy and practice of integration and empowerment of refugee women in Armenia](#). The contribution of the interns allows ICHD to effectively enlarge the community of practice.

**ICHD activities in figures: 2011**

- **9 Town Hall Meetings (1000 participants)**
- **15 Off-the-Record meetings (300 participants)**
- **15 policy briefs (more than 2000 readers reached)**
- **8 Viewpoints (more than 1500 readers reached)**
- **5 publications (more than 3000 readers reached)**
- **3 international conferences (300 participants)**
- **30 trainings (1200 trainees)**
- **20 round tables (300 participants)**
- **Flash mob “Against Skewed Sex Ratio of Births in Armenia” (150 participants)**
- **10 interns**

**More about ICHD ▶**

Established in March 2000 in Yerevan, the International Center for Human Development (ICHD or the Center) is a leading think tank in the South Caucasus that brings together a team of highly-qualified analysts and researchers with strong academic background and substantial experience in both public and private sectors committed to professional excellence and ethics. We cultivate a culture of inclusive policy making process, develop and introduce innovative instruments effective in the regional, national and local policy environments.

ICHD provides quality advice, policy analysis and development services to our stakeholders including government, civil society, the private sector and development partners, creating innovative policy communication tools and promoting adaptive environment for dialogue. We also champion development and introduction of new technologies used for effective participation of citizens in decision-making. Over the past decade ICHD became a center of excellence and knowledge in a broader region and internationally recognized as a credible and attractive partner.

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