

**THE PUBLIC COUNCIL OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
PERFORMANCE REPORT  
FOR 29/05/2009 – 31/12/2010**

## ***General Report***

The Public Council of Armenia (PCA) was established on 12 July 2008 by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia. On March 11, 2009, the Bylaws and the first composition of the PCA consisting of 12 members were approved. Thereafter, 12 sectoral committees (the total number of individuals involved in committees is **1950**) were formed and the chairpersons of those committees were elected.

***On 29 May 2009, the Public Council of Armenia, forming its full composition, launched its activities, which was fixed by the Decree of the RA President.***

**1950** members involved in the PCA committees represent over **1200** non-governmental organizations (NGOs), unions, associations and foundations; Marzes (regions) are represented by **422** members (21.7%), and the number of female members is **635** (32.7%). **329** candidates of sciences and **129** Doctors of Sciences/professors serve in 12 sectoral committees of the PCA. The age-group breakdown of the PCA sectoral committees is as follows: 18-30 age group - 17%; 31-45 age group - 21,9%, 46-60 - 36,7%, and 61 years old and over - 24,4%. In the frameworks of the PCA activities, 66 subcommittees function, and working groups are formed to discuss specific issues.

According to the PCA Bylaws, the Public Council of Armenia discusses raised issues and adopts decisions thereof at its plenary sessions. The PCA Chairman too may submit his conclusions and recommendations on the raised problems. In addition, the PCA committees have the power to submit independently issues, conclusions and recommendations to the relevant state authorities.

In the reporting period, **11** plenary sessions of the PCA were held, where **43** agenda items were discussed and **26** decisions were adopted, and **18** pieces of information on various issues were heard. A part of the aforementioned agenda items was selected from among numerous issues raised by the public, once they passed respective discussions at respective PCA sectoral committees. The remaining part of issues was raised by the PCA members. The RA President raised two issues for consideration of the PCA, namely, (i) "On Declaring an Amnesty" and (ii) the pre-signed protocols of 31 August 2009 "On the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey" and "On Development of bilateral relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey". Those issues were discussed in all PCA committees and respective decisions thereof were adopted.

The working group of the Public Council, in collaboration with corresponding subdivisions of the RA National Assembly and the RA Government, has introduced amendments to the regulations of the RA National Assembly and the RA Government, which would allow the PCA members to participate in the discussions of the above-mentioned state authorities. [Note: The amendments have been already made in the agenda of the RA Government and are in progress in the agenda of the RA National Assembly].

In 2010, the PCA delegations paid official visits to the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), where negotiations with the NKR authorities were held, and to Moscow, where a bilateral Memorandum was signed with the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.

On July 7, 2010, in New York City the Public Council of Armenia joined the membership of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS) and participated in the works of the General Assembly of the international organization.

In March 2010, the working group on agricultural affairs, under the leadership of the PCA President V. Manukyan, and with the participation of Board members of PCA Committee on Agriculture and Environment (H. Tadevosyan, Y. Javadyan, Kh. Harutyunyan), visited Lukashin and Karakert communities of Armavir Marz, met with members of the cooperatives established there and discussed issues of their concern. After comprehensive discussions, it was decided to promote the development of agricultural (consumer) cooperatives.

In 2010, the PCA working group (V. Manukyan, H. Tadevosyan, V. Safaryan, K. Arakelyan, R. Atoyanyan, Y. Javadyan, Kh. Harutyunyan, A. Ter-Tachatyan) visited Tavush Marz to gain first-hand information about the situation in close border villages: the group submitted its conclusions developed as a result of the visit to the RA Government.

Another working group of the PCA (G. Badiryan, K. Ghazaryan, H. Hovhanissyan, A. Ter-Tachatyán, and Markos Archbishop Hovhannissyan) visited life-term prisoners, by numerous application-requests of the latter.

In November 2010, the members of the youth subcommittee of the PCA, with the support of Gagik Manasyan, PCA Youth Subcommittee Chairman, organized a charity campaign, to distribute books and gifts to socially vulnerable families of the Khachik Village in Vayots Dzor Marz.

Below is the brief outline of issues discussed at, and recommendations and conclusions developed by, the PCA, PCA committees and working groups.

The issues raised by the Public Council members, discussed at sectoral committees, and decided on (resolved) at the PCA plenary session include:

1. Recommendations on the development of cooperation in the agricultural sector of Armenia: There were other recommendations too regarding the area (a working group, and then the PCA Committee on Agriculture and Environment were established within the frameworks of the PCA). As a result, the above-mentioned recommendations were incorporated in the "RA strategy of sustainable agricultural development for 2010-2020"; all drafts regarding the said area pass expert examination at the respective PCA committee; and the PCA members V. Movsisyan, Kh. Harutyunyan and Y. Javadyan were included in the Board of the RA Ministry of Agriculture.
2. The package of recommendations on general secondary education (the PCA Subcommittee on Education and Science, the working group involved in general education affairs): The package was discussed during the meeting with the RA President, with the participation of the RA Minister of Education and Science. A part of recommendations included in the package was accepted the RA Ministry of Education and Science.
3. The Standing Committee (co-chairmen H. Musayelyan and H. Demoyan) studying the contents of the broadcast TV programs and consequences thereof submitted its conclusions and recommendations, and then, initiated the signing of the Charter of Ethical Principles of the RA TV and Radio Broadcasters (PCA members H. Hovhanissyan and Gr. Badiryan).
4. Establishment of the National Partnership Network (PCA Committee on Entrepreneurial Activities and Consumers' Affairs). The RA Government adopted a decision regarding this recommendation on the establishment of the National Partnership (NP) Foundation, jointly with the "National Partnership" NGO (please see detailed information in "Committee on Entrepreneurial Activities and Consumers' Affairs" Section hereof).
5. Recommendations on electronic communication regulation issues submitted to the RA Government and the RA Public Services Regulatory Commission (A. Sadoyan, Chairman of the PCA Committee on Entrepreneurial Activities and Consumers' Affairs, and PCA member H. Musayelyan).
6. Decision regarding illegal actions of the staff members of Noubarashen Special School 11 against students of the same school; and ensuring impartial process of criminal cases instituted against journalist M. Sukhudyán: As a result, accusations brought against M. Sukhudyán were removed and individuals having committed illicit and immoral actions were accounted to criminal liability and sentenced.

Addressing the issues of public concern, the Public Council, after discussions in respective committees, issued decisions and submitted recommendations and conclusions to the RA President and the RA Government regarding:

1. Making amendments to the RA Laws "On Language" and "On General Education" (several subcommittees of the PCA): As a result, the National Assembly of the RA adopted a compromising version of the amendments.
2. The future destiny of the "Moscow" Cinema summer hall (G. Azizyan, Chairman of the PCA Subcommittee on urban development and architecture): The PCA, voicing against the demolition of the construction (the summer hall), proposed all stakeholders to find compromising alternatives through negotiations. At present, the consideration of the issue is halted.

3. Making amendments to the RA Law “On Public Organizations” (NGO Law), (PCA Committee on Civil Society Development and Human Rights): Recommendations were submitted to the RA Ministry of Justice, which initially did not accept the recommendations. However, after the conclusion of the international expertise, the majority of recommendations developed by the Committee were considered and adopted by the RA National Assembly.
4. Regarding Trade Unions, making amendments and restatements to the RA Labor Code (PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs):  
During the hearings organized within the scope of the PCA, with participation of representatives of all Trade Unions, the Deputy Minister of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Chairman of relevant Standing Committee of the RA National Assembly, the above-mentioned draft law was discussed and most of recommendations developed by the PCA were adopted.
5. Regarding traffic and parking activities, recommendations on developing a concept of exploitation of means of transportation and regulation of parking activities: The discussion of the issue is in progress (S.Hovhanissyan, Chairman of transportation and traffic subcommittee of the PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs).

Based on the opinions and recommendations of the PCA committees, V. Manoukyan, Chairman of the Public Council of Armenia, addressed written notices and applications to the RA Prime Minister on issues as follows:

- Opening an “Armenian School of Human Rights” in Vanadzor (PCA Committee on Civil Society Development);
- The concept of developing nonmetallic minerals processing industry (PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs);
- Building of Armenian-Iranian railroad (PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs);
- Urban development projects of the RA settlements and urban construction measures in the RA rural communities (PCA Committee on Territorial Administration and Local Self-government);
- Application-complaint of the residents of Artavaz Village (PCA Committee on Agriculture and Environment);
- “Cometa” Scientific Research Institute (PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs).

The PCA Chairman addressed different letters/notices on a number of pressing issues regarding:

- Recommend to award a decoration to the pilots of “Ararat Avia” Company, for participation in the Artshakh war (to the RA President);
- Holding of a competition to fill the vacant position of the Principal of the secondary school of Vorotan Village, Syunik Marz (to the RA Minister of Territorial Administration);
- The land users of “Dalma Gardens” (to the RA Minister of Territorial Administration);
- Detention of RA citizens in the Republic of Georgia for crossing the Abkhazia-Russia border (to the RA Minister of Foreign Affairs);
- Installation of the monument (statue) of Garegin Njdeh in Yerevan (to the Mayor of Yerevan);
- “Massis 3” construction cooperative (to the RA Prime Minister);
- Recommendations of “Green Land” NGO on planting forest shelter-belts along the sides of the interstate highways and other roads (to the RA Prime Minister);
- Shut-down of operations of the “Steklomash” Plant (to the RA Prime Minister);
- Project on “Sis, Massis and Nor Hayastan” lakeshore resorts (to the RA Prime Minister);

- Topographic, laser scanning and filming works of the cluster of monuments located in the territory of “Zorats Karer Settlement” State Reserve (to the RA Prime Minister);
- Application of representatives of a number of “Jermuk” mineral waters plants regarding the provisions of the RA Law on Geographical Indications (to the RA President and the RA Prime Minister).

### *PCA committees and committee members*

#### **Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs (180 members) consists of 16 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 22 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 5 plenary and 15 Board sessions. In particular, the Committee, within the scope of its activities, discussed, developed and submitted recommendations/proposals and conclusions on issues as follows:

1. Innovative policy of the Republic of Armenia (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister);
2. The RA Industry Development Concept (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister);
3. Issues related to solar power production/supply (heliofication) and development of helio technological industry in Armenia (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to to the RA President and the RA Prime Minister);
4. Development of new types of nonmetallic mineral products (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister);
5. Construction works of Armenian-Iranian railroad (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister).

By presentation of the Committee’s subcommittee on urban development and architecture, the PCA has decided on another issue of public concern – the future destiny of the summer hall of the “Moscow” Cinema in Yerevan.

In the Committee session, the PCA discussed and submitted a written letter to the RA Public Services Regulatory Commission containing the PCA’s conclusions on the formation of gas tariff:

Committee Chairman Vazgen Safaryan submitted for consideration at PCA sessions information regarding survey works of the uranium mine in Syunik Marz, and the accident condition of bridges of Armenian railroad.

The Committee also discussed the following issues:

- Circumstances hindering effective organization of works of “Nairit Plant” CJSC,
- Introduction of inventions on new renewable energy sources;
- Recovery of small aviation in the RA;
- The need of building a railroad semi-station at the students’ district of Kanaker-Zeytun community (the issue was addressed to the Mayor of Yerevan by V. Safaryan, Chairman of the PCA Committee on Financial-Economic and Budgetary Affairs);
- Cases of malpractices of tax formalities;
- The authoring project on establishing a “Park of Armenian National Dram” (positive conclusion);
- The process of implementation of “The RA Resettlement Action Plan” adopted in 2003, (in progress);

- The RA Government's recommendations on making amendments to the RA Law "On Excise Tax" (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was forwarded to the RA Prime Minister);
- Accident condition of the railroad bridges (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was forwarded to the RA Prime Minister);
- On introducing "professional day of mechanical engineers/mechanists" (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister);
- Application of inhabitants of Nor Kyuri on asphaltting of the road (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister).

On December 14, 2010, the Board members of the Committee met with the RA Prime Minister and discussed industry development issues.

### **Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

The Public Council's Committee on Agriculture and Environment (144 members) consists of 3 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 17 members. In the past period, the Committee held two plenary and six board sessions: issues discussed at the sessions included:

1. "Study of production organization issues in farm enterprises and development of rural (agricultural) cooperatives" and the draft law "On Agricultural Cooperation in Armenia" (in the initial phase, a working group was formed from among the PCA members, which discussed the said issue and submitted to the Committee);

In the reporting period, the Committee organized two visits to Lukashin community of Armavir region and Karakert community of Baghramyan region.

During the first visit, the PCA members met with the members of cooperatives established in the said communities: they discussed the raised issues and ways of finding solutions thereof.

The second visit was organized in the same communities, with the leadership of the RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan. During the meeting with members of cooperatives in the communities, the RA Prime Minister prioritized the importance of creation of consumer cooperatives for the development of agriculture, where farm enterprises were joined on voluntary basis, to use lands jointly and jointly address problems facing them. Thus, the joining of efforts in that way granted the opportunity to reduce operational costs by nearly 20-30% and to engage in intensive farming.

An opinion was formed that to ensure development of agriculture, it was necessary to promote the development of similar type of cooperatives.

2. Recommendations on the status of land of "Berdadzor-Kapavadzor" gardening NGO;
3. Issues on alienation of 21.76 hectares of land from the territory of "Jrvej" Forest Park;
4. Jointly with the village head, the Committee studied and addressed (in progress) issues raised by a number of inhabitants of Khachpar village of Massis region (Ararat Marz) related to gas, drinking and irrigation water supply;
5. The status of the "Dalma" gardens.

In addition, the following issues were raised and discussed at the Committee sessions:

- Use of irrigated lands, preparation of irrigation systems, irrigation water supply, and the starting date of irrigation period: The Committee discussed the plan/schedule of irrigation water supply (particularly, the schedule of irrigation water supply from Sevan-Hrazdan system) and made adjustments in the volumes of irrigation water demand and irrigation water supply periods. The volume of water and water release periods were decided and guaranteed.
- Issues related to the construction of "elite" buildings in Yerevan;

- To market the agricultural products, the Committee, jointly with the Federation of Agricultural Associations, Union of Legal Entities (FAA ULE), organized acceptance and storing of agricultural products in the cooling facility nearby the “Sebastia-Malatia” market, and delivery of products to sellers;
- Installation and effective exploitation of hail suppression (anti-hail) stations;
- Issues related to seed breeding and selection: The Committee members held unofficial discussions with relevant specialists on topics including the project on developing wheat seed breeding and production, and assistance to seed breeding enterprises for the implementation of the project. It was proposed to allocate the imported high reproduction wheat seeds to the seed breeding enterprises and to control the process of organization of reproduction.

Issues discussed at the meetings of subcommittees and working groups of the Committee and respective recommendations thereof included:

- Seed breeding (the document signed by Y. Javadyan, Chairman of the PCA Committee on Agriculture and Environment, was submitted to the RA Minister of Agriculture);
- Livestock breeding;
- Sheep breeding (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Minister of Agriculture);
- Rehabilitation of irrigation and watering systems (the document signed by Y. Javadyan, Chairman of the PCA Committee on Agriculture and Environment, was submitted to the RA State Committee for Water Management);
- Issues related to the use of water and land reserves of Ararat Valley.

During the on-site visits, the Committee members studied the issue of alienation of land plots adjacent to Tichina Street in Yerevan for the purpose of development, and proposed to ensure compliance of construction with urban development norms, by maintaining the required distance of 300m between the construction objects and N2 Cemetery. The proposal was accepted.

The Committee studied, discussed and provided positive solutions to applications, complaints and proposals of the inhabitants of the following settlements:

- Berkaberd and Kayanavan villages, Ijevan region;
- Akunk village, Vardenis region;
- Gavar town;
- Artavazd village, Kotayk Marz;
- Arzakan village, Hrazdan region;
- Armavir town;
- Raffi street, Yerevan;
- Application of residents of Kanaker district (Yerevan) on ensuring irrigation water supply to homestead lands;
- Restoration of the boiler house near Building 2, Avan Kuchak district, Yerevan,
- Issues related to enlargement of land plots (land consolidation) of residents of Nalbandyan village, Armavir Marz;

The Committee organized seminar-discussions on the development of agricultural cooperatives, visited a number of cooperatives in Armavir Marz. On November 23-24, 2009, the Committee, jointly with “FRUITFUL ARMENIA” organized a conference on agricultural issues.

## **Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs (204 members) consists of 6 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 11 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held three plenary and two Board sessions.

The Committee discussed the project on development of telemedicine (the project document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister and the RA Ministry of Health). On June 6, 2010, Gagik Harutyunyan, President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia, applied to the PCA with the request to seek conclusion of the above-mentioned Committee on making amendments to the Law on “Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues”. After comprehensive discussions, the Committee submitted its conclusion to the RA Constitutional Court. In addition, the Committee discussed the following draft laws related to health care and social areas:

- Draft Law “On Health Care”;
- “On Medicaments”;
- “On Social Assistance”;
- “On Charity”;
- “On Medical Aid and Servicing of Population” (the document signed by D. Dumanyan was addressed to A. Babloyan, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Health Care, Maternity and Childhood of the RA National Assembly);
- “On Homeopathic Stem Cells” (the document signed by D. Dumanyan was submitted to A. Babloyan, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Health Care, Maternity and Childhood);

The Committee also discussed the following issues: financing of the health care system (insurance medicine); accreditation and licensing; regulation of works of private medical institutions, etc. The Committee also responded to 54 application-complaints regarding social issues.

## **Committee on Religion, Diaspora and International Integration Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Religion, Diaspora and International Integration Affairs Committee (216 members) consists of 4 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 9 members. In the past period, the Committee held four plenary and nine Board sessions.

The Committee discussed and submitted for the consideration at the PCA session the following proposals:

- establishment of a carpet weaving art museum in Yerevan;
- implementation of commemoration measures to honor the memory of Woodrow Wilson, ex-President of the U.S. (a letter regarding the proposal signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA President and the RA Prime Minister) and
- carrying out restoration and repairs works at Martiros Saryan House-Museum, due to unfavorable conditions of the Museum (the issue was referred to the consideration of the RA President and the RA Prime Minister, in a letter signed by the PCA Chairman);

The Committee Chairman Ruben Safrastyan provided regular information at the PCA sessions (on the status of relations) between Armenia and Turkey.

At the proposal of subcommittees, the Committee discussed proposals on the establishment of PCA structures (representations) in foreign countries; ensuring broadcast hour of the PCA; and discussing topics on “Challenges to spiritual security of an individual in the 21 century and the role of secular religious structures in that area”.

## **Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport**

The PCA Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is the largest committee of the Public Council (402 members), therefore, its works are mostly conducted in subcommittees and working groups. The Committee consists of 4 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 11 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 3 plenary and 11 Board sessions. The Subcommittee on Education and Science, the Subcommittees on Culture, Sports and Youth held respectively 4, 5, 6 and 12 sessions.

The Public Council initiated discussion and development of the package of recommendations regarding problems arisen in the educational sector of Armenia. The Subcommittee on Education and Science, as well as the working group engaged in secondary (general) education area, after 8-month discussions submitted the package of recommendations to the RA President.

The Subcommittee on Education and Science organized its works mainly through 10 working groups involved in areas as follows: preschool, secondary and higher education, science, legislation, information and correspondence, vocational training, moral and ethical education, ensuring the quality of education, introduction of innovations, and accreditation. The Subcommittee discussed the area development strategy; the progress of graduation and admission exams; and the issue of the quality of school textbooks;

The Subcommittee on Cultural Affairs submitted to the consideration of the PCA session issues related to restoration of historical and cultural monuments of Armenia, as well as issues concerning maintenance of churches delivered to, and use of lands under the disposition of, the Holy Seat St. Echmiadzin. The session heard the results of on-site visit to examine the issue (namely, alienation of illegal constructions built on the lands under the disposition of “Haghartsin” monastic complex). In addition, the Subcommittee organized open discussions on the following topics: future destiny of the summer hall of “Moscow” Cinema; current situation in the area of secondary (general) educational and the prospective development project of traditional culture in the RA regions.

Issues discussed at the Youth Affairs’ Subcommittee sessions included:

- Employment of youth after post-graduation;
- Social security of students and social-economic condition of young families;
- Organization of delivery of training on certain disciplines in the Army;
- Stipends/training allowance;
- Issues related to reduction of State-guaranteed free places for education at higher educational institutions.

The package of recommendations on the training of officers of the Armenian Army and the studies of the educational level of soldiers are in the process of development.

The Subcommittee on Sports, in addition to its current issues, discussed the issue of initiating the process of ensuring equal remuneration (salary) rates for secondary schoolteachers of Physical Training Discipline and coaches working in the sports schools.

## **Committee on Defense, National Security and Internal Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Defense, National Security and Internal Affairs (74 members) consists of 4 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 7 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 6 plenary and 6 Board sessions. The Committee discussed its proposals regarding fulfillment of National Program Action Plan dedicated to the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of victory in 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War, and submitted the proposals to the PCA session (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA President and the RA Prime Minister). In addition, the Committee conducted a survey (polling) on Police performance evaluation (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the Head of the Police), and the results of the polling was submitted to respective authorities. Issues related to the progress of consideration of applications/complaints filed by the RA citizens with the RA Police subdivisions.

The Committee also discussed issues regarding establishment of Officers' mutual aid union within the structure of the RA Ministry of Defense and teaching the military defense training Discipline at the RA secondary schools.

### **Committee on Civil Society Development**

The PCA Committee on Civil Society Development (156 members) consist of 5 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 11 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 4 plenary and 7 Board sessions. The Committee conducted two expertise of the Draft Law "On making amendments to the RA Law on Public Organizations" and submitted its standpoints and recommendations to the RA Ministry of Justice. Initially, the document was not accepted. However, after the conclusion of the international expertise, most part of recommendations of the Committee was considered.

The Committee proposed and drafted the Charter of Ethical Principles of the RA TV and Radio Broadcasters, which served as basic for the final version of the Charter endorsed by 12 TV companies.

In addition, the Committee provided its expert opinion on the Draft Laws "On making amendments to the RA Law on Means of Mass Media" and "On Making amendments to the RA Civil Code". The Committee also voiced its proposal of not applying the provision of 2009 amnesty on election fraud/violation crimes and crimes of violence against journalists. The Committee raised the issues of revising the RA Government Decision 1042-N of 05/08/2010 (the document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister and the RA National Assembly), illegal actions of the staff members of Noubarashen Special School 11 against students of the same school; and ensuring impartial process of criminal cases instituted against journalist M. Mukhudyan:

Law specialists serving in the Committee provided free legal counseling to twenty RA citizens/applicants. Issues raised in applications received from citizens and organizations were submitted to the Supervisory Service of the RA President, the RA Ministry of Justice and the RA Chief Prosecutor's Office.

The Committee members participated in many local and international consultations/panel discussions, conferences and seminars on various topics and issues of the civil society, including hearings organized at the RA National Assembly, to discuss draft laws "On making amendments to the RA Law on Public Organizations" and the restated version of the RA Electoral Code.

### **Committee on Entrepreneurial Activities and Consumers' Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Entrepreneurial Activities and Consumers' Affairs (85 members) consists of 5 subcommittees and 5 working groups. The Board of the Committee includes 12 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 4 plenary, 6 Board sessions (including expanded session) and 22 regular sessions.

On the initiative of the Committee, the following issues were discussed at the plenary sessions of the Public Council:

1. The issue of reduction of rates (tariffs) and improvement of the quality of internet access services;
2. The project of establishing "National Partnership Foundation" and "National Partnership Network" structure providing broad range of telecommunication services.

The Committee's recommendations were accepted by the Public Council and later submitted to the RA President, the RA Government and the RA Public Services Regulatory Commission:

By the proposal of the Committee, the PCA Committee on Agricultural and Environment discussed at its plenary session the Project of promoting the production of agricultural products and contributing to the marketing of agricultural products, with the help of modern means of telecommunication, which was approved by the Board.

With the participation of representatives of the relevant department of the Municipality of Yerevan, condominiums and other stakeholder organizations, the Committee, at its session, discussed the need to improve the poor state of elevator maintenance services in the multi-apartment buildings. In consideration of the fact that as of the date it was impossible to ensure in practice full renewal of the elevator operations, the session adopted a decision on proposing relevant organizations to organize, in addition to renewal of equipment, measures directed at prevention of emergency/accident situations. In particular, it was proposed to import certain required spare parts from other countries, organize domestic production, and take actions contributing to delivery of quality repairs services.

Through on-site visits, with joint participation of members of PCA Subcommittee on protection of consumer rights and public services working group, officials of relevant division of the RA Ministry of Economy and representatives of mass media, the Committee introduced the picture of malpractices of underweight in the commercial area, carried out regular related surveys and disseminated, via mass media, results to the public.

At present, the Committee continues its works on the development of information system necessary for protection of consumer rights; “Public Opinion Database” based on the sociological surveys; establishment of teleconnection centers in the villages (within the framework of the NPN”); development of “Village Announcement Board” website through formation of a structure ensuring direct contact with the public through mass media.

### **Committee on Territorial Administration and Local Self-Government**

The PCA Committee on Territorial Administration and Local Self-government (166 members) consists of 4 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 11 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 7 plenary and 12 Board sessions, where it discussed issues “On Measures ensuring documents of urban development projects of the RA settlements” and “On ensuring urban construction and architectural services in the RA rural communities”. [The document signed by the PCA Chairman was submitted to the RA Prime Minister]. The Board members of the Committee participated in the Board sessions of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration. A comprehensive project to address priority problems of Dzoraghbyur summer settlement with over 5000 residents (based on applications of the residents filed with the PCA), as well as to grant a status to the said settlement is under discussion within the scope of the elaboration. The Committee convened an off-site session at Ujan community of Aragastontn Marz, held jointly with the public council of the community. In the result, assistance was provided in addressing such matters as installation of drinking water pipeline, operations of a kindergarten for 50 children. The Committee conducts works with communities of close border villages (Vazashen, Paravakar, Koti, and Karmiraghbur).

In addition, the Committee discussed at its session issues regarding:

- 5-year strategic plan of the RA Government on Improvement of management and maintenance (exploitation) of available housing stock;
- The project of enlargement of communities;
- Forest operations alternative project;
- Improvement of the education system;
- Announcing of “planting of greenery” year in the communities.

All the above-listed issues were covered in the “Hayastani Hanrapetutyun” official newspaper and by the TV broadcast.

### **Committee on Demographic and Gender Affairs**

The PCA Committee on Demographic and Gender Affairs (65 members) consists of 2 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 7 members. In the reporting period, the Committee held 5 plenary and 12 Board sessions, where it discussed the issue regarding the implementation of the National Program on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society. The Committee proposed to establish

“the Day of the Family” holiday ( the proposal signed by E. Vardanyan, Chairman of the PCA Committee on Demographic and Gender Affairs, was submitted to the RA Prime Minister). The Committee discussed the RA Law “On Temporary Incapacity to Work” (the document signed by the PCA Chairman were submitted to the RA President), as well as submitted some of its recommendations on the restated version of the RA Family Code during the discussion held at the RA National Assembly.

The Committee also discussed “Fundamental family issues” and submitted a proposal to implement “the Year of Family” project. The proposal was submitted to the RA Government.

### **Committee on National Minority Affairs**

The PCA Committee on National Minority Affairs (78 members) consists of 3 subcommittees. The Board of the Committee includes 5 members. In the reporting period, the Committee convened 5 plenary and 6 Board sessions, to discuss issues regarding Armenia’s report on the progress of implementation of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, as well as 2 incidents related to Fioletovo village. The Committee held 3 off-site sessions, including the off-site session in Hovtashen village of Ararat Marz, in connection of the disappearance of 13 years old Ezidy teenager.

### **Committee on State and Legal Affairs**

The PCA Committee on State and Legal Affairs (181 members) consists of 10 subcommittee. The Board of the Committee includes 12 members. In the reporting period, the Committee called 4 plenary (including expanded sessions) and 8 Board sessions.

The Committee on State and Legal Affairs, jointly with the RA Chamber of Advocates, participated in the works of elaborating the RA Draft Law “On making supplements and amendments to the RA Law on Advocacy”. The Draft Law provides for:

- a) establishment of Advocacy School;
- b) definition of socially insecure (vulnerable) groups entitled to receive free of charge legal assistance, who may receive legal assistance on civil, constitutional and administrative cases as well;
- c) clarification of inter-structural issues of the Chamber of Advocates;
- d) differentiation of advocacy (legal counseling) organizations acting as specialized organizations;
- e) definition and clarification of rights and guarantees of advocates.

Presently, the Draft Law is under the consideration of the RA National Assembly.

The Committee, jointly with the RA Chamber of Advocates, is also elaborating the draft of average price list (tariffs) for reasonable expenses included in the judicial costs as per the RA Administrative Procedure and Civil Procedure Codes. The Committee has brought this Draft up for wide discussion and submitted it for the approval of the Board of the RA Chamber of Advocates.

With the same organization, the Committee held discussions on such topics as advocacy secret and violations of human freedoms, and developed corresponding recommendations:

The Committee examined the situation concerning transactions executed for the needs of the State, and produced a relevant statement.

In addition, the Committee held discussions related to such topics as “Increase of infertility in the RA” and sex education at schools. The subjects of discussions of the Committee included problems facing the children raised at orphan’s home once they leave the orphanages: the Committee discussed future actions in that area, and issues related to protection of their social rights in the RA. The Committee also discussed compliance of domestic legislation concerning employment of disabled persons and fundamentals of employment rights with international legal acts.

The Committee representatives participated in the committees of the RA National Assembly, as well as in conferences organized by various international organizations to discuss the new draft of the RA Electoral Code. The Committee submitted to the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs of the RA National Assembly numerous recommendations developed by the working group on the Draft Electoral Code.

The PCA Committee on State and Legal Affairs organized and developed drafts on making supplements and amendments to a number of laws, as well as organized and participated in public discussions on many laws and draft laws.

Partnership networks have been developed through which participatory monitoring of a number of areas was held, particularly, competitions and attestations in the RA civil service and notary public offices.

In the Committee, the Charter of Ethical Principles of the RA TV and Radio Broadcasters was drafted, which fundamental provisions were incorporated in the final version of the Charter endorsed by 12 TV companies.

The working groups of the Committee developed “Principles of Integrity in the Public Services”, a new educational module, which later was introduced by some NGOs, in collaboration with the RA Civil Service Council, in the mandatory training program of civil servants.

On the instruction of the Committee Chairman, and at the request of beneficiaries having applied to the PCA, the Committee members participated in the judicial sittings on cases regarding those individuals.

In connection of the dispute between the plaintiff and the respondent, and with the direct participation of their lawyers, discussions were held to offer an alternative solution, which resulted in the reconciliation of the disputing parties.

By the proposal of Public Council member **Karen Bekaryan**, the decision on the holiday of the State Flag was discussed and adopted at the PCA session.

Public Council member **Vladimir Movsisyan** submitted during the sessions of the PCA information about the progress of agricultural products storing in 2010, problems associated with the organization of marketing of agricultural products, and ways of increasing efficiency of irrigated land cultivation in the RA.

Public Council member **Karine Danielyan** raised (many times) at the PCA plenary sessions problems connected with the environmental situation in the city of Yerevan, presented for consideration sanitary-hygiene, urban development and construction problems. To discuss all issues, a working group was formed by the PCA.

During the meeting with the RA President, K. Danielyan raised the issue of sustaining a defeat in the informational warfare with Azerbaijan, which later deserved consideration and solution.

In addition, following numerous applications of K. Danielyan addressed to the RA Ministry of Education and Science, a committee is formed by the decree of the Minister, which will be engaged in the implementation of the UN ten-year program “Education for Sustainable Development”. The strategy of the Program and the sequence of action were developed by K. Danielyan.

Public Council member **Khosrov Harutyunyan** coordinated the activities of the working group on agriculture formed within the frameworks of the PCA.

Public Council member **Armen Ter-Tachatyan** is involved in the activities of the working group functioning under the leadership of the Ombudsman, which currently drafts amendments and elaborates recommendations on the RA Law

“On Television and Radio Broadcasting”. Mr. Ter-Tachatyan takes active participation in discussions of recommendations on the Law.

Public Council member **Hovik Musaelyan** (jointly with **Hayk Demoyan, Hovhannes Hovhanissyan and Grigor Badiryan**) coordinated the works of drafting and endorsing (collecting of signatures) the Charter of Ethical Principles of the RA TV and Radio Broadcasters, in connection with the contents of the Armenian TV programs. Mr. Musaelyan (jointly with PCA member **Arshak Sadoyan**) also coordinated activities of

the working group formed within the frameworks of the PCA, which studied issues related to reducing the rates and improving the quality of internet access services.

Public Council member **Hovhannes Tadevosyan** assisted in and ensured visits of the PCA working group to Tavush Marz.

### ***Applications/Complaints and proposals addressed to the Public Council***

In the period covering May 5, 2009 to December 1, 2010, the office of the Public Council of Armenia received 411 application-complaints, 95 proposals, 33 official letters (written notices) and 108 other notices. Most part of application-complaints and proposals was referred to respective PCA committees. In addition, the PCA committees too received many applications and proposals. Of all application-complaints under the personal control of PCA Chairman V. Manoukyan solutions were provided to 33 application-complaints, 8 remained unresolved and 12 are in progress.

Twelve sectoral committees of the Public Council have received application-complaints and proposals in proportion as follows:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Number of Application-Complaints</b>	<b>Number of Proposals</b>
Education, Science	44	7
State and Legal Affairs	176	
Civil Society	30	3
Financial-Economic	40	46
Agriculture	18	17
Health	54	8
Territorial	11	4
Defense	20	3
Entrepreneurial	12	3
National Minority	5	
Gender		2
Religion / Diaspora	5	2

Most part of citizen's applications addressed to the Public Council related to unfair judgments of court instances, including:

1. Cases of violation of ownership right concern\_
  - Residents of the North Avenue in Yerevan;
  - Land users of "Dalma" gardens (around 50 signatures) (PCA discussed and submitted its conclusions to the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration);
  - Housing disputes between private individuals;
  - Creation of groundless and unwarranted obstacles by housing stock fund, municipality, cadastre and notary public offices.
2. Cases of setting wrong going of cases by prosecutors and pre-trial investigators.
3. Cases of bankruptcy of citizens due to failure to repay bank loans;
4. Cases of violation of rights of RA citizens and refugees

The next group of applications relate to social issues concerning\_

- Pensions of disabled persons;
- Application-requests to seek medical assistance (State-guaranteed free medical assistance order, medicines);
- Recovery of allowances removed due to deficiencies of scoring system;

- Homeless individuals;
- Tuition fees of higher educational institutions;
- Increase of job places.

There are also many applications concerning\_

- Applications for provision of low-interest loans;
- Return of deposits;
- Applications to receive financial assistance;
- Various issues of transport area (rates, new lines, stop stations);
- Gas tariffs and charges for home servicing of gas supply equipments;
- Administrative-territorial changes;
- Road improvements in villages;
- Problems associated with garbage removal in Yerevan;
- Accruals made by Armentel;
- Internet service tariffs;
- Protection of consumer rights.

The PCA has received large number of complaints concerning environmental issues, in particular:

- Mining operations in different regions of Armenia;
- Tree felling, elimination of sanitary protective zone (forest shelter-belts) in different parts of Yerevan;
- Spruce forests of “Kanaker” Hydro Power Plant;
- Tree felling in “Student Park” in Yerevan;
- Khosrov forest;
- Building of a café in Areni village reserve.

Since the Committee on State and Legal Affairs has received the largest number of applications, a working group is formed and functioning for reception of citizens. Through relevant subcommittees, the PCA provided legal counseling to beneficiaries having applied to the PCA, examined and provided answers to many applications of citizens addressed to the Public Council.

Analyzing applications, the Committee experts have arrived at the conclusion that many legal problems arise due to unawareness of citizens of their rights, their passive standpoint, improper practices of officials, as well as the fact that quality legal counseling and services are unaffordable for the majority of citizens.

***In the result of discussions and examinations of the above-mentioned applications addressed to the Public Council, it may be concluded that many functions of the state and legal system, the municipality (in particular, architectural-construction and real estate departments) and the RA State Committee of the Real Estate Cadastre contain operation-related corruption risks, which are conditioned also by imperfectness of the legislative field regulating the specified areas.***

The Public Council received about 95 proposals from NGOs and individuals, which were referred to respective committees for organizing discussions. Below are some of the proposals submitted by and regarding such issues as:

- Pan-Armenian association of power engineering specialists - establishment of training center in the energy system, which would train and supervise professionals in that area;
- Former employees of aviation - the concept of development of small aviation;

- A. Karapetyan, member of Subcommittee on Diaspora – maintenance of housing stock (facilities) of Yerevan and repairs of roofs;
- RA citizen V. Vardanyan – development of an Armenian standard;
- J. Asryan, member of the Subcommittee on historical and cultural values – the issue of having PCA representatives in the Diaspora;
- G. Nersisyan, member of the Subcommittee on Culture – Installation of the monument (statue) of Garegin Njdeh in Yerevan;
- PCA member Y. Javadyan – proposal on the establishment of joint commercial companies (the proposal signed by the PCA Chairman was directed to the RA Minister of Agriculture);
- The purity of broadcast language, etc.

The Public Council of the Republic of Armenia

May 5, 2011, Yerevan, Armenia