



**Statement of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia on
“The survey of public opinion on corruption in Armenia”
conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center – “Armenia” Foundation**

Dear Partners,

On 21 February, the Caucasus Research Resource Center – “Armenia” Foundation (CRRC Armenia) presented the results of the 2019 Corruption Household Survey in Armenia. The survey was initiated by the Transparency International Anticorruption Center within the framework of the “Engaged Citizenry for Responsible Governance” project, which is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia, being one of the key actors in the anti-corruption sector in Armenia and an active participant in anti-corruption reforms, it places particular emphasis on conducting objective surveys that reveal public perceptions and opinions on corruption and its manifestations in Armenia, the publicizing of their results, as well as their targeted use by government agencies, civil society and the private sector to improve public administration and the development of anti-corruption policies and programs; and below we present the Coalition's position on some parts of the survey.

First of all, it should be noted that the survey was mainly based on the methodology developed on the basis of professional standards. However, the **data** in some figures and tables included in the **research report** and presented at the presentation of the report are **misleading; moreover, they have subsequently led to ungrounded speculations, some non-objective and unjustified conclusions have been made based on them, and misinformation was spread.**

One of the obvious examples justifying the above is the public discussion of the “Draft RA Law on Making Amendments and Addenda to the RA Law on Public Organizations” recently held in the National Assembly, as well as statements made by some CSOs at various platforms during press conferences that ***the public, according to the data of “Public Opinion Survey on Corruption in Armenia” knows the CSOs well, specifically those 5 CSOs¹ that are recognized by the public and which work transparently.*** Whereas, according to the data of the same survey the opposite can be stated: ***94.3% of the 1500 respondents surveyed, i.e. 1415 people are not aware of any NGOs with an anti-corruption mission operating in Armenia.*** This shows that anti-corruption NGOs are recognized by only **5.7% of respondents**, based on which so-called “**beneficial**” CSOs build their speeches during various public events. Specifically, it is about public awareness of non-governmental organizations involved in anti-corruption activity in Armenia, ***Figure 45*** and the following paragraphs and tables. Thus:

¹ Survey report figure 45, page 62

- First: it should be borne in mind that as a result of a quantitative survey, any data that is **small in number** is not presented in percentage terms but **is presented in the number/frequency of responses**. Moreover, it is definitely not presented graphically, followed by a thorough analysis of recognizability of this or that structure depending on the educational level of the respondents. Is there a need for a detailed analysis if it comes to an **average of 5 people**?
- Second: if we look at the recognizability of organizations with such a mission along with the responses presented in the following **Figure 46** to assess their effectiveness, which shows that **40% of the 5.7% that “know” the CSOs are “unaware” of and have not assessed the effectiveness, it becomes clear that only 51 people are aware of CSOs’ activities.**

Thus, an objective question arises as to whether the quantitative research revealed the trends or the specifics?

The next issue we would like to address is that the names of some CSOs are included in the questionnaire, despite the clear instruction that their names will not be read and all possible answers shall be accepted (it is clear that this was done to ease the coding). Unwilling to question the accuracy of the research, however, it is clear that **in case of quantitative research, it is important to maintain the accuracy of the step and instruction at all stages to ensure a reliable final result**. This raises the question of whether the list wasn't a guide for the interviewers to document the structures, and whether the structures whose names were not included in the list, were not deprived of the opportunity to take their possible place from the very beginning.

At the same time, being confident that the above methodological problem is not intentional, we nevertheless wish to state that **the name of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia is misrepresented in both the questionnaire and the analysis, which may have had an impact on the identification of the structure.**

In addition to the aforesaid, we consider it necessary to refer to Question 56 of the Questionnaire and the awareness of the Government's anti-corruption actions in Section 6 of the Survey Report. In this case, it is not clear what criteria were taken into account when including the names of certain electronic platforms for anonymous corruption reporting in the questionnaire, because for example the Bizprotect.am website operated by the Armenian Lawyers' Association, is also an effective anonymous reporting platform.

Citizens and representatives of the business sector report about corruption risks and incidents through BizProtect, and they are provided with free legal advice on tax, customs, procurement, labor and other legal matters.

According to data summarized for the period since the launch of the reporting platform in July 2017 till December 2019, in the scope of the received **94 reports, 86** letters were sent to state and local self-government bodies, contacts with the whistleblowers and government agencies have been maintained; other necessary measures have been taken. A systematic solution to the above mentioned reports was given in **15** cases; the reporting were satisfied in **13** cases, official clarification or consultation was provided in **22** cases. It should be added that a number of reports are still under investigation. Moreover, highly appreciating the effectiveness of the platform, the latter was included in the EU's **“CivicTech4Democracy”** Handbook.

Based on the foregoing, the Coalition calls on organizations that work in the field of civil society to refrain from making biased and possible partial presentation of controversial results of the survey public, for the purpose of creating an advantageous situation for themselves through the dissemination

of misinformation, misleading the public or other manipulative ways, but rather to maintain constructive and partnership relationships with the community of civil society organizations.

Governing Board of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia

“NGO Center” Civil Society Development NGO,
“Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises” NGO,
“Armenian Association of Young Doctors” NGO,
“Rights and Freedom Center” NGO,
“Center for Economic Rights” NGO,
“Tukhmanuk Human Rights and Education Center” NGO,
“Union of Communities of Armenia” NGO,
“Support for Equal Opportunities Foundation”,
“Armenian Lawyers’ Association” NGO, Coordinating Secretariat.

The statement was accepted at a distance meeting of the Governing Board of the CSO Anti-Corruption Coalition of Armenia on 19 March, 2020.