

RSC SPECIAL WORKSHOP & “FOCUS GROUP”

“THE FUTURE OF ARMENIA-EU RELATIONS”

7 November 2014

EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn; Memorandum of Understanding, launching the Single Support Framework for EU-support to Armenia, which sets strategic objectives and priorities for future cooperation in 2014-2017 (between €140 - €170 million).

The three following priority sectors of intervention have been agreed: private sector development, public administration reform and justice sector reform. In addition, complementary support will be provided for training and knowledge sharing to support the modernization of public institutions; and for civil society to build stronger democratic processes and accountability systems.

- *Private sector, public administration and justice will be the three priority sectors* for implementing reform.
 - These measures will be complemented by *support to the modernization of public institutions and support to civil society*.
1. First package of EU assistance for 2014 under the new Single Support Framework. The fresh funding of **€19 million** will focus on small businesses and human rights protection in Armenia. The assistance is provided within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.
 - *Supporting businesses* and innovative start-ups can, in a longer run, boost more job opportunities, increase the economic competitiveness, and enhance the overall progress of the private sector of Armenia. Support to SME Development in Armenia (**€7 million**): to enhance the policy making process and coordinated support to SMEs, strengthen and organize private sector that implements SME policies, upgrade process of commercialization of ideas by linking research institutions and businesses, improve design and management of existing incubators and Free Economic Zones, and diversify access to finance for innovative start-ups and small businesses (further **€15 million** is set aside for the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) project aiming to diversify the sources of financing for start-up businesses and SMEs).
 - In the field of *human rights protection*, the new programme will help improve relevant legislation in the areas of right to free elections, torture prevention, anti-discrimination, gender equality and child protection. Support to human rights protection (**€12 million**): to enhance electoral system, make progress in torture prevention, provide greater protection against discrimination for persons belonging to minorities, people with disabilities and to other vulnerable groups, develop effective gender equality mechanisms and protection of victims of domestic/gender-based violence, and improve child protection system.

2. Financing Agreement for a Sector Support Programme to Agriculture and Rural Development worth **€25 million**.

- Financing Agreement of the Support Programme to Agriculture and Rural Development: Sector Support Programme to Agriculture and Rural Development (€25 million) has been adopted in 2013, as a part of the Annual Action Programme for Armenia 2013. The programme is intended to contribute to efficient and sustainable agriculture and development of rural areas in Armenia, in line with the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) approach. The action will help improve the agricultural institutions, encourage the development of farmers' associations and improve access to more affordable food for Armenian citizens, and contribute to better conditions in rural areas.