

COUNTRY PROFILE

Republic of Armenia

I. BACKGROUND

Area:	29,743 sq. km
Population:	3,006 million (2014)
GDP:	USD 11,64 billion (2014)
GNI per capita:	USD 8,124 (2014)
HDI:	0.733; ranked 85 th out of 188 countries (2014)
Life expectancy at birth:	74.7 years (2014)
Mean years of schooling:	10.9

Sources: World Bank; UNDP Human Development Report

Indicators on Quality of Public Service¹:

Indicator ²	2000	2005	2010	2013	2014
Government effectiveness	31.71	51.71	49.28	58.37	46.15
Regulatory quality	45.10	55.39	60.29	58.85	60.10
Rule of Law	36.84	41.15	39.81	45.02	43.76
Control of corruption	30.24	32.20	30.48	39.23	40.38

Source: World Bank

Political and Administrative Structure

The Republic of Armenia is a democratic state with a parliamentary system of government, as a result of the referendum on constitutional amendments held 6 December 2015.

State power is dispensed in compliance with the Constitution and other laws based on the principle of separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

The **President of the Republic of Armenia** is the Head of State. The President ensures adherence to the Constitution and oversees the regular functioning of legislative, executive and judicial authorities. The President is the guarantor of the Republic of Armenia's

¹ Percentile ranks indicate the percentage of countries worldwide that rank lower than the indicated country, so that higher values indicate better governance scores.

² *Government effectiveness* captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. *Regulatory quality* captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. *Rule of law* captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. *Control of corruption* captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. The President of the Republic is elected by the citizens of the Republic of Armenia for a term of five years.

Legislative Power. The single-chambered National Assembly is the supreme legislative authority of the Republic of Armenia. The National Assembly consists of 131 deputies, 90 of which are elected on the basis of proportional representation and 41 of majority representation. The National Assembly is elected through general elections for a term of five years.

Executive Power. The Executive power is exercised by the Government. The Government is composed of the Prime Minister and Ministers. Based on consultations held with the National Assembly factions, the President appoints the person nominated by the parliamentary majority to be Prime Minister or – when not possible - the person nominated by the largest number of the National Assembly members. The President of the Republic appoints and dismisses members of the Government following the Prime Minister's proposals.

The Government's policy in different areas is developed and implemented through Republican Executive Bodies (19 ministries and 7 public administration bodies adjunct to the Government), which are established, restructured and dissolved by presidential decrees, following recommendations of the Prime Minister.

The Ministry is a body superior to state bodies and organizations acting within its system. The Ministry is composed of the Minister, Deputy Ministers, Advisers, Press Secretary, Assistants and Aides, Ministry Staff, regional units, state bodies acting in the administrative field of the Ministries, as well as state non-profit organizations under the Ministry's subordination.

The public administration body adjunct to the Government is comprised of the Head of the respective body, Deputy Heads, Staff, regional units, as well as state non-profit organizations under the subordination of the respective body.

The Staff of the Republican Executive Body is a state administrative entity that ensures the full and efficient implementation of power conferred upon it by the relevant legislation. The Staffs of the Republican Executive Bodies are comprised of structural units (departments, divisions, and secretariat) and stand-alone units (agencies, inspectorates) whose tasks are set by the Government.

Administrative and territorial units are composed of *marzes* (regions) and communities. Armenian territory is divided into 10 *marzes*. The Government appoints and dismisses the *Marzpets* (Marz/Regional Governors). *Marzpets* occupy discretionary positions. *Marzpets* are accountable to the Government. *Marzpets* implement the government's regional policy, coordinate the activities related to regional services of executive bodies, with the exception of cases those delineated by law.

The *marzes* are subdivided into urban and rural communities, wherein a local self-government is exercised. There are 915 communities in Armenia: 49 urban, and 866 rural communities. The capital city, Yerevan, has the status of "community".

II. CIVIL SERVICE PROFILE

a. *Legal basis of the civil service*

It should be noted that practical measures to establish the country's civil service were initiated only about a decade after gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It was not until 1998 when a number of working groups were set up to develop the draft law on civil service. The Government assigned the Public Administration Reform Commission with implementing civil service reforms aimed at building a new civil service system in the country. The Commission's work was followed by the adoption of the Law on Civil Service in 2001 and the establishment of the Civil Service Council in 2002. In 2011, the Law on Public Service was enacted to provide for comprehensive regulation of public and community service.

The legal framework of the Civil Service of Armenia includes the Constitution, international agreements signed by the Republic, the Law on Civil Service of 2001, the Law on Public Service of 2011, the Decisions of the Civil Service Council, and other legal and regulatory acts.

Following its establishment in January 2002, the Civil Service Council initiated the development and adoption of regulations, as conferred upon it by the Law, i.e., Regulation on Holding Competitions and Attestations, Regulation on Trainings, Regulation on Enrolment in the Personnel Reserve, etc.

Other aspects of the civil service, such as remuneration of civil servants, are regulated by the relevant legal framework (Law on Remuneration for Persons Occupying State Positions), whereas employment issues, not regulated explicitly by civil service legislation, are subject to the general labour legislation provisions.

In particular, the legal framework of public service includes:

- RA Law "On Public Service", adopted on 26 May 2011;
- RA Law "On Civil Service", adopted on 4 December 2001;
- RA Law "On Remuneration for Persons Occupying State Positions", adopted on 12 December 2013;
- Decision No 3 of 29 January 2002 of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia "On Approval of the Charter of the RA Civil Service Council";
- Decision No 17-N of 13 June 2002 of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia "On Establishing the Procedure of Conducting Competitions for Filling Vacant Civil Service Position";
- Decision No 546-N of 26 June 2006 of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia "On Establishing the Procedure of Secondment of Civil Servants for the Purpose of Training, Improvement of Professional Knowledge and Work Skills";
- Decision No 818-N of 12 October 2010 of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia "On Establishing the Procedure of Testing for Certificates of Civil Service Junior Position and of Occupying Vacant Civil Service Junior Position";
- Decision No 1510-N of the RA Government of 20 October 2011 "On Approving the Procedure of Developing Work Plans, Accessing Work Plans into Electronic

Document Flow System and Approving thereof, Appraising Performance through the System and Relating Pay to Performance in RA Public Administration Bodies”.

The **Civil Service Law of 2001** regulates staff positions in the Presidential and Government Administration, ministries, executive bodies of the republican and regional levels, and other government bodies established by law (with the exception of the Central Bank).

In its nine chapters, the Civil Service Law of 2001 regulates relations pertaining to the civil service, namely:

- Rules concerning the definitions and the determination of the scope of application of the Law (in terms of state bodies, positions and position holders);
- Main principles of the civil service and definition of the legislation applying to it (including the subsidiary application of the Labour Code to some aspects of the employment relationship and working conditions);
- Classification of the civil service positions (11 levels in four groups) and the corresponding grading system for the position holders (the civil servants); regulation of the “roster” of CS positions and the “passport”³ of each individual CS position as key elements of the CS system;
- General requirements and conditions for access to CS positions and the methods to be used for filling the vacancies in positions included in the CS roster (plus rules on final appointments);
- Mandatory training and “attestation” of civil servants;
- Legal status of civil servants (rights, duties, restrictions, incentives, disciplinary regime, retirement age, etc). Causes of removal from CS positions/termination of the civil service relationship/status;
- Civil Service organization and management bodies”⁴.

b. Definition of civil servant

The Law on Public Service of 2011 defines **public service** as “*the exercise of powers vested in the State under the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Armenia, which shall include state service, community service⁵, state and community positions*”.

According to the Public Service Law of 2011, the **state service** is defined as a professional activity aimed at performing functions and resolving issues conferred upon state entities by the RA legislation. The state service incorporates the **civil service**, judicial service, diplomatic service, and special services⁶.

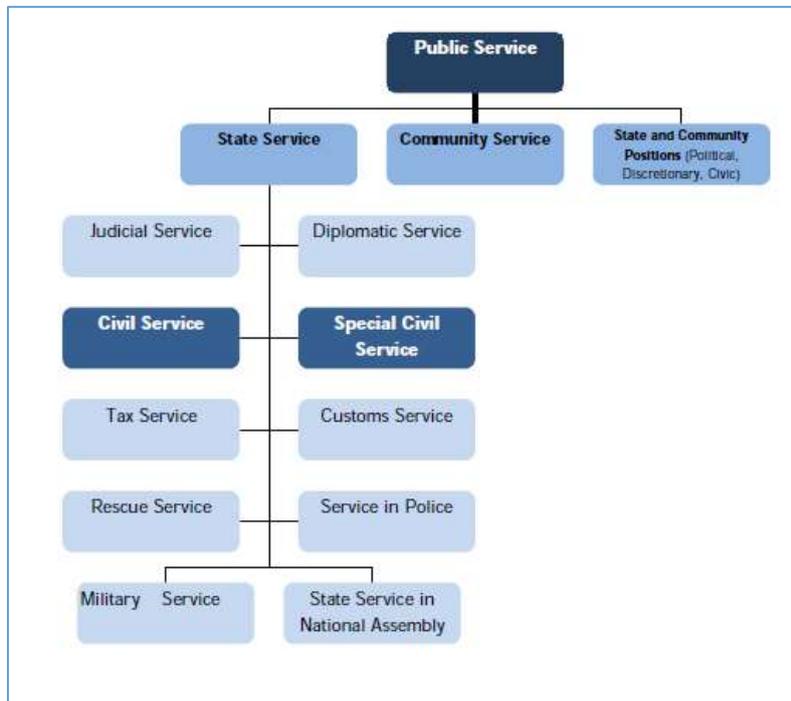
³ The Law sets the minimum general requirements to be set in such “passports” or job descriptions, with regard to professional grade and years of experience needed to occupy such positions.

⁴ OECD/ SIGMA. 2010. *Assessment of the Civil Service System of the Republic of Armenia*.

⁵ The community service is defined as a professional activity aimed at performing functions and resolving issues conferred upon local self-governing bodies by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

⁶ Special services include Defence, National Security, Police, Tax, Customs, and Rescue Services of Republican Executive Bodies; State Service in the Staff of the National Assembly of the RA, National Security Council,

Graph 1: *Public Service organisational structure in Armenia*



The Law on Civil Service of 2001 defines **civil service** as “a professional activity independent from the changes of correlations between political forces, which is performed in the bodies envisaged in Clause 1, Article 4 of the Civil Service Law⁷, with the purpose of implementing the objectives and functions reserved to those bodies by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia” (Article 3, clause 1/a).

Only the positions included in the Roster of Civil Service positions are considered **civil service positions**.

A **Civil Servant** is “a person occupying a position (with the exception of temporary vacant positions), according to the procedure defined by Clause 1, Article 15.1 of the Civil Service Law and it included in the Roster of Civil Service Positions or is enlisted in the Civil Service Personnel Short-term Reserve” (Article 3, clause 1/d).

Civil service positions are classified into four groups: highest, chief, leading, and junior positions based on the levels of responsibility, decision-making authority, representation as well as complexity of the issues assigned to these positions (Article 7 of the Civil Service Law of 2001).

Investigative Committee of the RA, Department of the Investigative Committee of the RA, as well as other services envisaged by the law.

⁷ These bodies are: (a) the Staff of the President of the RA; (b) The Staff of the Government of the RA; (c) The Staffs of the Republican Executive Bodies of the RA; (c1) The Staffs of state bodies acting in the administrative field of the RA Ministries; (d) The Staffs of the *Marzpetarans* / Regional Governors’ Offices; and (e) The Staffs of other government bodies established by law, with the exception of the Central Bank.

The group of the highest civil service positions is further sub-divided into subgroups 1 and 2, and the groups of the chief, leading and junior civil service positions - into subgroups 1, 2 and 3 (subgroup 1 being considered as the highest subgroup of the given group). Each civil servant can move up one grade without change of position no earlier than 3 years upon receiving the grade corresponding to his/her position.

The Civil Service Law also clarifies that persons occupying political, discretionary and civil positions, as well as the technical support personnel in the bodies envisaged under Clause 1 of Article 4 [listed in footnote 7] are not considered civil servants.

In September 2002, the Civil Service Personnel Roster was approved, and beginning from 1 **November 2002**, persons occupying positions listed in the Personnel Roster were considered civil servants. This **signified a shift to the new system**. The newly formed civil service system incorporated 41 state entities with 7,297 civil servants.

c. Civil servants' profile

Eligibility criteria

The Constitution of the Republic (adopted in 1995 and substantially amended in 2005 and 2015) recognises and guarantees "equal access (for all citizens) to the public service" (Article 30.2, Clause 2).

Article 11 of the Civil Service Law of 2001 stipulates that to enter the civil service a candidate must be a citizen of the Republic, meeting the requirements of the job description (or Passport) of the given position, possessing knowledge of the Armenian language and having reached the age of 18 years, without discrimination of any kind.

Total number of civil servants

Total number of civil servants in Armenia was 6,657, as of 1 January 2016⁸.

d. Civil servants' remuneration structure

The Civil Service Law of 2001 and the Law on Remuneration of Persons Occupying State Positions regulate remuneration of civil servants. According to the latter law, civil servants' pay includes basic salary (or official pay rate), additional salary and bonus. The **basic salary** is estimated on the basis of a common base amount and multiplied by a coefficient set for each group (grade), sub-group (class) and duration of service in the relevant sub-group. The common base amount is determined on an annual basis as stipulated by the Law on State Budget. As such, the 2014 State Budget set the common base amount of persons holding state positions for the period from 1 July to 31 December at 66,140 Armenian Dram (AMD) per month (about USD 140).

Additional salary includes extra payments (such as wage supplements for overtime, work in dangerous conditions, etc) and increments (such as wage premiums determined on the basis of rank and work experience), but it cannot exceed 30 per cent of the basic salary.

⁸ Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia (2016).

[For example, in 2015, a junior level civil servant with four years of experience received compensation in the range of approximately 90,000 AMD (or USD 190-260) per month, based on information provided by the Civil Service Commission].

III. BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR HR POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Article 36 of the Civil Service Law of 2001 stipulates that the Civil Service Council and the Chiefs of Staff are the main bodies responsible for the management and organisation of the civil service.

The **Civil Service Council** is an **independent state body in charge of implementing a unified state policy in the area of civil service.**

Article 37 of the Civil Service Law of 2001 regulates the scope of powers and functions of the Council. Its seven members are appointed by the President based on nominations provided by the Prime Minister. The Council is an autonomous entity in terms of its organization and budget.

The main **objectives of the Council** are to ensure: [a] proper functioning of the civil service system in the Republic of Armenia; [b] effective management and organization of its activities and its further improvement; and [c] transparency of the civil service system.

Specifically, the Civil Service Council's **functions include:**

- Developing primary and secondary legislation relating to civil service;
- Monitoring the enforcement of civil service legislation;
- Approving, updating, amending the Roster of Civil Service Positions;
- Organizing and implementing competitions to fill in vacant positions in civil service;
- Organizing and providing certifications of civil servants;
- Organizing trainings for civil servants, secondment for improving their professional knowledge and skills;
- Maintaining long-term and short-term reserves;
- Dealing with appeals on civil service matters as well as monitoring compliance with the Code of Ethics in civil service;

Ministries also have personnel management units responsible for HR management – together with, and under the supervision of the respective Chiefs of Staff – including calculation of the seniority/length of experience of staff employees, conducting competitions and attestations, organization of trainings, preparation and conclusion of employment and temporary contracts (employment contracts for specific time), management of employee labour discipline issues, management and maintenance of personal files, general record keeping, etc.

a. Organisation of the selection and recruitment process in civil service

Recruitment in civil service is regulated by the Law on Civil Service of 2001 and the Civil Service Council Decision No 17-N on “Defining Procedures on Conducting Competitions for Occupying Vacant Civil Service Positions” adopted on June 13, 2002; as well as the Civil Service Council Decision No 818-N on “Defining Procedures on Conducting Testing for

Obtaining Certificates to Fill Junior Civil Service Positions, and to Fill Junior Civil Service Vacant Positions” adopted on 12 October 2010.

According to Article 12(1) of the Civil Service Law of 2001, a vacant civil service position is to be filled through out-of-competition or competition procedures.

Out-of-competition procedure applies in case of an urgent need to fill a vacant civil service position⁹ within a period of a week, and until the announcement of the competition for this position; a civil servant from the respective structural unit, meeting the formal requirements of the job, can be appointed to this post.

Competition is conducted to fill new civil service positions and positions which are not filled by the “out-of-competition” process (Article 14 clause 1 of the Civil Service Law).

The CSC manages the recruitment process jointly with the hiring state body, provides them with technical support, and it monitors recruitment. It can also intervene, should the merit-based principle is violated during the recruitment process.

The Civil Service Council publishes the announcement of a competition for the positions of the highest and chief levels, and the relevant bodies make the announcement for positions of the leading and junior levels one month in advance to holding the competition, in the press and other media, as well as online on the official website of the CSC.

The Competition Commission is formed no sooner than 24 hours before each competition is held, and is comprised of the CSC representatives, representatives of the body holding the competition (one third) and experts from scientific and academic institutions from the relevant fields of specialisation (one third each). Representatives of the civil society organisations can participate in the capacity of observers.

The competition process involves two stages of testing and interviewing. Multiple-choice tests are designed to check applicants’ knowledge of the relevant legislation (including the Constitution, civil service legislation, and legislation of the concerned hiring body) as well as test his/her capacity of working in the given position (Article 7 of the Civil Service Law). Those obtaining a score of 90 per cent for correct answers qualify for an interview.

The interview is held by a Competition Commission to determine candidates’ professional knowledge, competencies, qualifications and abilities to exercise the functions of the announced position. Following the competition result, the official responsible for the appointment selects and appoints one of the three top-listed candidates within three working days upon the receipt of notification. However, the selection of one candidate out of three is not required to be substantiated. This may be perceived as a weakness of the recruitment system in place.

Competition results can be appealed by an applicant and/or by a Commission member, in writing, and the appeals are dealt by the CSC.

⁹ With the exception of vacant civil service positions not included in the structural departments, as well as the newly created civil service positions.

Newly recruited civil servants are subject to a probation period of up to six months in compliance with the RA labour legislation.

Overall, SIGMA reports that the recruitment of civil servants mostly follows the principles of meritocracy, however “the scope and the practice are less transparent than advocated”.

As for the conditions of termination of civil service, the Civil Service Law of 2001 (Article 15.1) provides for permanent tenure for civil servants by default¹⁰. The Civil Service Law also provides extensive list of reasons for dismissing civil servants. In most cases, this relates to voluntary resignations, and to a lesser extent, dismissal results from the reorganisation and abolition of agencies.

Length of service or *seniority* of a civil servant is estimated as the entire period of occupying the civil service position, or being enlisted in the Civil Service Personnel Short-term Reserve (Article 17). The Law also specifies that the calculation of the job seniority should be within the civil servant’s general and professional civil service tenure.

b. Promotion process in civil service. What legal instruments regulate this area?

The Civil Service Law of 2001 specifies a number of provisions on the promotion or mobility practices in civil service. SIGMA (2014) notes that the recruitment of the basis of “out-of-competition” procedure presents a promotion process yet without applying merit-based principles. The Law (Article 20, clause 7) also provides for secondment of civil servants for improving their professional knowledge and skills. The secondment order is to be defined by the CSC.

c. Performance evaluation, training, and career development. What legal instruments regulate this area?

In accordance with Article 20 of the Civil Service Law of 2001, the CSC is responsible for organising, coordinating and assessing training needs of civil servants jointly with the HR units of relevant state bodies. Civil service authorities provide their recommendations on training plans on an annual basis to the CSC.

The Civil Service Law mandates that civil servants shall undergo **mandatory training** at least once every three years. They are also entitled to receive **non-mandatory training** in case of special requirements to improve their professional knowledge and skills. Training is organised based on the request of the responsible Chief of Staff, and in line with a programme approved by the CSC.

As for the **performance evaluation**, Armenia practices systems of attestation¹¹ and performance appraisal, which are called to serve different purposes. All civil servants should undergo performance appraisal that is conducted on a semi-annual basis by his/her immediate

¹⁰ Exception is the position of the chief of staff; their term of office is set for four years, which can be renewed for periods of four years.

¹¹ Attestation is now abolished according with the amendments introduced in the Civil Service Law of 2014; the amendments will come into force from 1 January 2017; <http://csc.am/en/newsfeed/news/2194-ra-csc-and-wb-focus-on-boasting-civil-servant-motivation>

supervisor (Article 20.1 of the Civil Service Law of 2001). Appraisal includes the assessment of the civil servant's result of the work, timeliness and quality of his/her performed tasks, as well as of managerial skills. Yet, performance appraisal results have no connection with promotion or training of a civil servant, but they do affect bonus payments.

Another type of performance evaluation - regular mandatory attestation - of civil servants is conducted once every three years. There are also "extraordinary" attestations, which are conducted based on the decision of the direct supervisor and after one year of the last regular attestation. Attestation is carried out in two ways: first, is the documentary attestation and second is a test and an interview, whose aim is to certify that the civil servant has the relevant knowledge to perform his/ her functions in a given position, as specified in the corresponding job description.

The CSC coordinates attestation of the highest and chief positions, while public authorities manage attestation of the leading and junior level civil servants in their respective state bodies. Attestation is carried out not by the immediate superior of a civil servant, but by Attestation Commissions, which are formed in the same manner as Competition Commissions. Attestation results in deciding on civil servant's conformity or non-conformity with the occupied position only and, similar to performance appraisal, they are not linked with a civil servant's professional promotion or identification of his/her training needs.

IV. ETHICS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION STRUCTURES

The legal framework for corruption prevention and promotion of ethical behaviour of civil servants is part of the Civil Service Law of 2001 and Public Service Law of 2011. The latter (adopted later than the Law "On Civil Service") provides rules of ethics for a public servant and high-ranking officials (Article 28, clause 3) to ensure the proper behaviour of civil servants, exclude a conflict between public and private interests, as well as to enhance public confidence in public institutions¹². The enforcement of these rules relies on the ethics commissions, which are established in the respective public institutions. However, there is no one central body responsible for ensuring uniform enforcement of ethics rules in the civil service (OECD, 2014).

There is a separate **Ethics Commission for High-Ranking Officials**, established in 2012. It consists of five independent members appointed by the President, in line with Article 38 of the Public Service Law of 2011. The Commission, among other functions, is responsible for collection and analysis of asset declarations by high-ranking officials, a new system introduced in 2013. However, the OECD report of the Round 3 Monitoring of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan on Armenia notes that these "declarations are narrow in scope", while the Ethics Commission for High-Ranking Officials "has no mandate or resources to verify the declarations or to sanction non-compliance" (2014, p. 5).

The Law on Public Service also introduced the concept of whistle blowers in 2011, requiring public servants to report to "the respective officials about offences committed by other civil

¹² Civil Service Council Decision No 844-N on the "Procedure of Formation and Operation of Civil Servants Ethics Commissions and their Functions" adopted 26 September 2012.

servants, as well as about any unlawful activity, including corruption related actions with respect to public service (Article 22).

As part of mandatory training programme for civil servants, a 72-hour anti-corruption course was introduced in 2013. However, OECD (2014, p. 54) reports low levels of completion of this training (in proportion to the total number of civil servants in the country)¹³.

The Ethics Commission for high-ranking officials also delivers anti-corruption trainings to civil servants but mainly on the issue of asset declaration. Currently, the Commission jointly with SIGMA is elaborating a draft code of conduct for high-ranking officials¹⁴.

The **Anti-Corruption Council**, initially established in 2004, became operational in a revamped format in July 2015 following the Government's decision No 165-N dated 19 February 2015 on Establishing the Council and Expert Task Force, as well as approving the Council's composition and its rules of procedures. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister. The Anti-Corruption Council is responsible for considering and endorsing the national anti-corruption strategy, developing recommendations for amending this strategy, endorsing sector-specific programmes developed under the strategy framework, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of activities arising from the anti-corruption strategy and ensuring cooperation with the international community, as well as with civil society representatives and other stakeholders in the anti-corruption field.

The Unit of the Government on Monitoring of Anti-corruption programmes acts as a secretariat to the Anti-Corruption Council responsible for implementing the national anti-corruption strategy for the period 2015–2018. The strategy's priority areas are education, health, public revenue and services delivered by the Police¹⁵.

V. CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS: PAST, CURRENT AND PLANNED

a. Past reforms

As reported by the Civil Service Council of the RA, a number of measures were implemented in the country with an aim to improve the legislative basis, recruitment, performance assessment and other related aspects in the field of civil service. Specifically, these included following changes:

- to ensure the social welfare of civil servants a mandatory medical insurance (social package) for civil servants was introduced in 2012;
- a new unified system of remuneration of persons occupying state positions, including civil servants, that envisaged a significant salary increase, was launched on 1 July 2014;

¹³ "In 2011, training was provided to 26 officials; in 2012 to 61; in 2013 to 107; and in 2014 (1st half-year) to 38 officials".

¹⁴ The Commission on Ethics of High-Ranking Officials has initiated activities related to public officials' code of conduct elaboration, <http://ethics.am/en/news/item/2016/02/04/news46/>

¹⁵ The Government of the Republic of Armenia and USAID has signed an agreement on implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the country, <http://www.gov.am/en/news/item/8265/>

- to review the attestation process of civil servants, a performance appraisal system has been implemented;
- to improve the process of recruitment into civil service, a unified certification system has been implemented for candidates for civil service junior positions, as well as a point system of evaluation of candidates to fill vacant positions in the interview stage of the competition;
- to make the civil service more competitive and attractive, to enhance the motivation and work efficiency of civil servants and to increase the flexibility in staff recruitment and promotion, respective amendments were made to the RA Law “On Civil Service” in June 2014; and, accordingly, a new scale of requirements pertaining to work experience has been adopted, which significantly narrowed the scope of differences existing between the requirements of the civil service and the non-civil service related work experience;
- to create a respective legislative framework for civil and other state services, to harmonize different types of services, and to ensure the uniformity of principles, the Law “On Public Service” was adopted in 2011;
- to provide electronic document flow systems and common databases, as well as to ensure information exchange, the new Civil Service Council’s website was put in operation (www.csc.am);
- to improve the rules of ethics for civil servants, a draft to “Ethics Code for Civil Servants” has been developed.

b. Current reforms

Considering the future priorities for the development of the civil service, “A New Policy Paper on Civil Service Reforms” has been developed jointly with EU SIGMA, on the basis of which a Civil Service Reform Strategy and Action Plan was developed and approved by the Government. It aims to depoliticise Armenian civil service and promote a body of professional and impartial civil servants. The goal of the strategy is a shift from the current system to a merit and career based civil service system incorporating both the strengths of the existing one and the best EU practices, standards and principles.

The strategy envisions setting up unified principles of performance appraisal of civil servants, their career promotion, as well as bringing the civil servants’ code of conduct rules in line with the EU and OECD standards.

c. Planned reforms

Based on the new approved strategy, the civil service reforms are planned to be implemented in three main directions:

1. Strengthening the civil service values, principles and sustainability, with the main focus on enhanced efficiency of public administration and improved quality of services provided to citizens;
2. Modernizing the key HRM mechanisms with regard to recruitment and selection, trainings, performance appraisal, mobility, ethics rules and integrity, job

classification and other related areas. For instance, beginning in 2017, the civil servants' attestation system will be replaced by the final evaluation system of civil servants;

3. Improving civil service management.

In addition, it should be noted that SIGMA, in its 2014 report, suggested a list of specific recommendations, which, among others, call for higher transparency in the recruitment process, application of merit-based practices to internal competition, conduct of organisational and individual training needs assessments, and introduction of unified monitoring mechanism to promote integrity of civil servants.

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The Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana (ACSH) was established in March 2013, when representatives of 25 countries, as well as of 5 international organisations, unanimously adopted the ACSH's Founding Declaration. The ACSH is a multilateral institutional platform for the continuous exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of civil service development, aiming to stimulate civil service transformation in the region, through capacity development activities, and by disseminating innovative approaches to civil service reform, through evidence-based solutions, informed by a comprehensive research and policy agenda. It has financial and institutional support from the Government of Kazakhstan, and backing of the United Nations Development Programme as the key implementing partner. The geographical range of the participating countries – currently encompassing 32 countries - stretches from the Americas and Europe through Central Asia and Caucasus to ASEAN countries, which demonstrates that effective civil service is a constant and universal need for all nations.

For more information, please visit: www.regionalhub.org

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