

Agenda

July 24, 2025

Library for Architecture, 35 G Tumanyan street (Zoravor Surb Astvatsatsin Church, left rear)

10:00–10:45 | Opening remarks and presentation of the research results by Socioscope: “Transformations and Resilience: A Participatory Study of Post-Revolutionary and Post-War Armenian Civil Society”

Discussion topics:

- Does Armenian civil society have the potential to cultivate a vibrant public sphere capable of driving social transformation and advocating for radical democracy?
- What is the nature of the relationship between civil society and the general public? How can NGOs and broader civil society groups evolve from being narrowly defined civic actors to more robust public actors?
- How do civil society representatives perceive their role? Are there divergent views on what this role entails, and how do these actors envision their contribution to fostering societal resilience?

Research presentation by Mariam Khalatyan, Socioscope, Senior Researcher

10:45–12:15 | Panel 1: Between Patronage and Partnership: Armenian Civil Society and the Western Donors

Discussion topics:

- How has Western funding empowered or professionalized civil society, and what have been the consequences for grassroots engagement? (How) Is Armenian civil society different from some of the Western civil societies and (how) is this related to external donor dependency?
- What are the implications of shrinking Western financial commitments for small and mid-sized CSOs? Who survives and who disappears?

Panelists:

Isabella Sargsyan, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Human Rights and Justice Programme Director

Andranik Shirinyan, Human Rights activist

Moderation by *Eviya Hovhannisyan, hbs Yerevan, Programme Coordinator*

12:15–13:30 | Lunch Break

13:30–15:00 | Panel 2: Russia’s Shadow and the Regional Entanglements of Armenian Civil Society

Discussion topics:

- How do Russia’s soft power and far-right narratives influence attitudes toward civic activism in Armenia?
- Armenia’s strategic dependence on Russia: How does it shape the civic sector’s boundaries of critique, advocacy, and risk-taking?
- Georgia’s autocratization: What are the consequences for Armenian actors who use Georgia as a safe haven for cross-border projects with Azerbaijan and beyond?
- Can Armenian civil society develop a strategic identity in a shrinking regional democratic space?

Panelists:

Tigran Grigoryan, Regional Center for Democracy and Security (RCDS), President

Artur Papyan, Media Diversity Institute, Director (tbc)

Giorgi Rodionov, Untitled Gallery / South Caucasus Center for Culture, Director

Moderation by *Mikayel Zolyan, Brusov State University, Assistant Professor, Social Researcher*

15:00–15:30 | Coffee Break

15:30–16:30: Closing roundtable discussion: Towards More Autonomous and Accountable Civil Society? (Format: Fishbowl with short input statements (7 minutes each), moderated debate and audience participation).

Discussion topics:

- In the pre-election period, how can CSOs contribute to free and fair elections, a democratic future of the country, and yet protect their autonomy and political independence?
- Is a strategic recalibration needed to ensure credibility, and public trust?

Panelists:

Gohar Shahnazaryan, Women's Fund Armenia, Co-Founder and Co-Director

Naira Sultanyan, Democracy Development Foundation, Director

Arpy Manusyan, Socioscope, President

Moderation by *Andranik Shirinyan*