



Annual Report 2022

About the Organization

The goal of the Union of Informed Citizens consulting NGO is to raise public awareness on a number of issues, promote public participation in important spheres of public life and in the decision-making process, as well as advance democratic values and reform. We believe that public awareness raising is the main and integral component of any democratic society.

Research and publications of the Union of Informed Citizens cover foreign policy and related issues, democratic values, economy, security sector, elections, reforms, as well as citizens' rights.

One of the targets of the Union of Informed Citizens is capacity-building of the media in Armenia. The organization also carries out media activities through the Fact Investigation Platform aimed at combating disinformation.

Together with its partners, the organization is involved in the process of improving the quality of elections in Armenia, both through observation missions and pre-election monitoring.

The organization actively participates in the advancement of a number of democratic reforms, shaping of public demand for reform and drafting of legal documents.

We do not represent the interests of any political party or other group.

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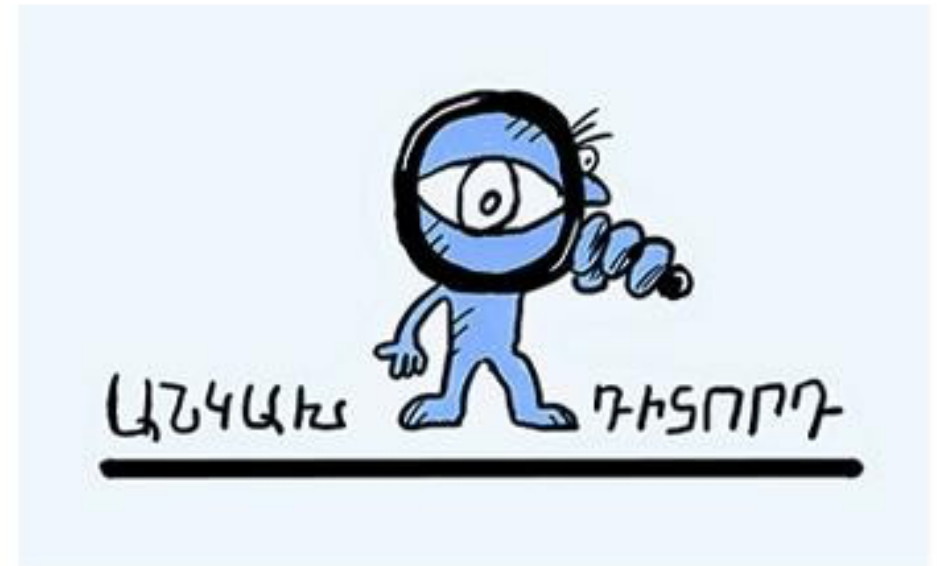


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The Fact Investigation Platform

In 2022, the Fact Investigation Platform (FIP) continued its activities aimed at fighting disinformation, false and manipulative information.

The year was marked by an information environment shaped by Russia's war against Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the war, FIP.am has published a number of articles and videos shedding light on the context of different episodes of the war. A number of publications referred to unmasking Russian propaganda during the war, as well as to the occasional disinformation in the Ukrainian media. In the context of the war, disinformation related to the South Caucasus region was also revealed. In particular, the Fact Investigation Platform published a number of articles referring to Russian and Azerbaijani propaganda containing manipulative or false information targeting the Armenian audience.

The Fact Investigation Platform continued its adherence to the principle of impartiality, scrutinizing the public statements of representatives of both the Armenian government and the opposition, and activity containing corruption risks.

In addition to fact-checking, the Platform continued its investigative journalism activity, publishing dozens of investigations that have been widely discussed by the general public.

The Platform attempted to enhance the accessibility of its publications by using different formats. In particular, video reports, public opinion polls (vox-pops), explainers were prepared based on the published articles, the FIP-podcast was released, during which the team members presented the details of writing different articles, the weekly "Factometer" program was released. Since the beginning of the year, a digest of the activity of global and regional fact-checkers has been presented every Friday under the title #InterCheck.

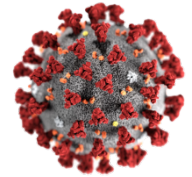
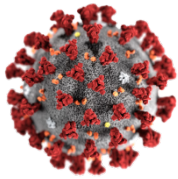
Based on the publications of FIP.am, criminal cases were initiated, officials were subjected to administrative sanctions, some officials had to come up with clarifications.

The public visibility of the Platform has increased, which is evidenced by the messages regularly received from users, where they express their opinion on various publications, as well as suggest to check different pieces of information.

Many publications of the Fact Investigation Platform have been republished by various news sites, a number of officials have referred to them in their public statements, and the team members have repeatedly been hosted by different programs and reports, public discussions, interviews, among others.

COVID-19 Response

In the first months of 2022, the Fact Investigation Platform continued to address the misinformation and myths that spread during the pandemic, as well as published articles on various aspects of the infection. To this end, on August 25, a Memorandum of Understanding was [signed](#) between Journalists for the Future NGO, Civilitas Foundation, Public Journalism Club, Media Initiatives Center, and the Union of Informed Citizens, which allowed to more actively counter the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 in Armenia and provide credible information about the vaccination process.



Counting Rally Participants

The internal political movements that started in Armenia after the snap parliamentary elections in 2021 continued in 2022 as well. In particular, after the victory of the current government in the snap parliamentary elections, the opposition "Resistance" movement regularly organized rallies. The Union of Informed Citizens carried out a count of rally participants during that period, preventing manipulations and speculations about the number of rally participants.



Seminar-Discussions/Journalists' Training and More

The year began with a seminar-discussion titled "[Obstacles to the Peace Process and Changes in the Region](#)" for about 27 selected journalists and opinion leaders within the framework of the "Foreign Policy and Coverage" series. Issues related to the opening of the Lachin Corridor and the negotiations on the conclusion of the peace treaty were discussed during the seminar.

In April, a roundtable discussion titled "[Reforms and Disinformation](#)" was held in Tsaghkadzor, in which more than twenty digital influencers and opinion leaders participated. The event was organized by the Union of Informed Citizens NGO with the support of Freedom House. During the event, officials representing various sectors had the opportunity to present the existing approaches to the reform process.



The 13th seminar-discussion within the framework of the traditional "Foreign Policy and Coverage" series dedicated to foreign policy developments took place on June 10-12 in Tsaghkadzor under the title "[New Challenges in the Region](#)". Representatives of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other officials and sectoral experts spoke at the event and had discussions with the audience.

We continued the discussions about the reforms within the framework of raising public awareness about the current reform process. A [relevant discussion](#) dedicated to police reform, the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard, was held in November.



Public Discussions

Starting from February, Union of Informed Citizens organized [public discussions](#) at Gavar State University and Martuni State Medical College on the topic "Introduction of the Patrol Service in Provinces of Armenia", during which the police reform process was presented to students.

In the summer, several public discussions were held on foreign policy and reforms. In June, two events dedicated to foreign policy were organized together with the Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. In particular, a [roundtable discussion](#) titled "Armenia's Foreign Policy Approaches and Security Threats: Reform of the Armed Forces" was organized on June 22, and a [public discussion](#) titled "Foreign Policy Challenges Facing the Republic of Armenia" was held on June 29.

In parallel with the introduction of the Patrol Service in the regions, [discussions](#) about police reform were organized with students in Yeghegnadzor and Vayk cities of Vayots Dzor Province in October.

At the end of the year, ahead of the constitutional reform in Armenia, a [public discussion](#) on the topic "Constitutional Status of the President in a Parliamentary Republic" was held with the Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.



Armenian Forum for Democracy

On May 20, the most significant event of the year, the [Armenian Forum for Democracy](#), was held in Yerevan on the initiative of Freedom House and the Union of Informed Citizens NGO, which aimed to bring together all parties interested in the promotion of democracy in Armenia to discuss the progress and challenges related to reforms.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia opened the event with special welcoming remarks. Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, Director for Europe and Eurasia Programs at Freedom House Mark Behrendt, also delivered welcoming speeches.

The welcoming remarks were followed by panel discussions on the democratic reform process in Armenia, consolidation of democracy and advocacy of human rights, as well as on disinformation and the media.

The forum was attended by high-ranking officials of the National Assembly and justice system, ambassadors, representatives of international human rights and Armenian civil society organizations.

Freedom House and the Union of Informed Citizens plan to make the Armenian Forum for Democracy an annual event.



Election Monitoring

The Union of Informed Citizens carried out an observation mission during the parliamentary elections in Hungary on April 3, 2022 with its two mobile groups. The goal of the mission was to study the differences between the electoral processes in Armenia and Hungary on the voting day.

The Union of Informed Citizens had a number of meetings with partner organizations of the "Independent Observer" alliance, resulting in decisions on the potential change in the methodology of the observation mission (switch to mainly mobile group-based observation).

Together with partner organizations, the Union of Informed Citizens also issued a [statement](#) regarding violations committed by the candidate for the chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission and the [partisanization](#) of the CEC. In addition, the organization also issued a [statement](#) regarding the situation around local self-government bodies in Vanadzor.

The organization carried out a long-term and short-term [observation mission](#) during the local elections on September 25.



Reforms

Police Reform

The organization took an active part in the development of the RA Police Reform Strategy and 2020-2022 Action Plan. In particular, Daniel Ioannisyann continued his active involvement in the Police Reform Coordination Council chaired by the Prime Minister.

The organization is also involved in the Police Reform Working Group headed by the Deputy Minister of Justice.

During 2022, the organization was involved in Patrol Service admission commissions.

Within the framework of monitoring activities, the Union of Informed Citizens organized visits to the Patrol Service and the Educational Complex of the Police, both by members of the organization and together with high-ranking officials, in order to identify the problems on the spot and find more concrete solutions.

The organization also issued statements regarding the [illegal actions of the Police](#) on August 24 and joined the [demand](#) for the dismissal of the Chief of the Police.



Constitutional Reform

The Constitutional Reform Commission, in which Programs Coordinator at Union of Informed Citizens Daniel Ioannisyan was involved as a representative of the civil society, actually halted its activities in 2020 due to the Nagorno Karabakh War, and failed to resume them in 2021.

However, the year 2021 marked the beginning of the process of establishing the new Constitutional Reform Council, regarding which the Organization presented a package of recommendations consisting of 7 clauses, which was eventually accepted. The recommendations referred to the roles of the council and the commission, particularly that the content generation of constitutional reforms should be carried out by the council and that the council should ensure public participation in the process. Meanwhile, the commission should provide legal support to the council, formulate the conceptual directions set by the council and prepare the draft of constitutional amendments (the draft of the new text of the Constitution) based on the concept approved by the council.

In 2022, the Constitutional Reform Council was formed, in which three members of non-governmental organizations are represented, including Daniel Ioannisyan from the Union of Informed Citizens.

Within the framework of its involvement in the council, the organization presents its observations on the form and content of the new Constitution, comes up with conceptual recommendations, as well as objections to the submitted proposals.

Electoral Reform

Union of Informed Citizens came up with recommendations related to electoral rights. In particular, the organization participated in the [parliamentary hearings](#) convened in the National Assembly, where the Draft of the Law on Amendments and Addenda to the RA Electoral Code Constitutional Law and a relevant package of bills were discussed. During the hearings, the organization expressed its position regarding the package and a number of unacceptable provisions contained in it.

Union of Informed Citizens, together with partner organizations, also issued a [statement](#) related to these issues.

Anti-corruption Reform

Union of Informed Citizens continued its involvement in the Anti-Corruption Policy Council (a member since 2019). In addition, the organization has been represented in the admission commission since the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Committee. In 2022, it was also represented in the selection process of investigators and criminal investigation officers as a member of the committee.

The legal affairs representative of the organization also acted as a national expert in the selection process of judges of the Court of First Instance and Court of Appeal of the Anti-Corruption Court under the Supreme Judicial Council, verifying the conclusions on the integrity of the candidates.



Income and Expenses Report

N	<i>Financial means in 2022 (by donors)</i>		<i>USD</i>
1	Freedom House, Washington	<i>Balance</i>	10674
		<i>Income</i>	70087
2	International Republican Institute, Washington	<i>Balance</i>	658
		<i>Income</i>	3982
3	National Endowment for Democracy, Washington	<i>Balance</i>	23186
		<i>Income</i>	191750
4	Open Society Foundations - Armenia, Yerevan	<i>Balance</i>	13330
		<i>Income</i>	111206
5	Open Society Foundations - Armenia, Yerevan	<i>Balance</i>	0
		<i>Income</i>	11604
6	OxYGen Foundation, Yerevan	<i>Balance</i>	2731
		<i>Income</i>	6547
7	Prague Civil Society Centre	<i>Balance</i>	3120
		<i>Income</i>	20340
8	U.S. Embassy in Armenia, Yerevan	<i>Balance</i>	29855
		<i>Income</i>	32241
			531311

N	<i>Expenses in 2022 (by implemented projects)</i>		<i>USD</i>
1	Advancing Democratic Culture in Armenia	<i>Expenses</i>	69716
2	Combatting COVID-19 Disinformation in Armenia	<i>Expenses</i>	4640
3	Public Debate on Foreign Policy and Democratic Reforms	<i>Expenses</i>	182831
4	Development of a Fact-Based Public Understanding of Crucial Matters through Diminishing the Impact of Disinformation and Manipulation	<i>Expenses</i>	72714
5	Promoting Democracy among Young Audiences by Increasing UIC's Visibility on Social Media	<i>Expenses</i>	8304
6	Early Elections 2021 – Domestic Observations and Citizen Empowerment	<i>Expenses</i>	9278
7	Promoting Fact-Based Information through Journalistic Investigations	<i>Expenses</i>	19531
8	Combating Disinformation in Armenia	<i>Expenses</i>	62096
			429110