

# PRESS-RELEASE

## EU-Funded EMPATY Project Launched to Strengthen Civil Society and Youth Engagement in the Kyrgyz Republic

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Hilfswerk International, an Austrian international non-governmental and non-profit organization, in partnership with national organizations Public Fund Open Line, Kyrgyz Forum for Rural Advisory Services - KGFRAS, and the Association of Fruit and Vegetable Enterprises - AFVE, has officially launched the EU-funded project “Empowered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for an Active and Prosperous Civil Society and Young Generation in the Kyrgyz Republic (EMPATY).”

During the opening event, Rémi Dufлот, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic, said: “The European Union totally supports this project. We recognize its great potential to benefit local communities. Partnerships between European and national civil society organizations can be vastly efficient in delivering high-quality services to citizens and communities. It is why the European Union will continue promoting civil society to address the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in our societies.”

The two-day kick-off meeting, held in Bishkek, brought together representatives of civil society organizations, government institutions, academia, and development partners to initiate coordinated action aimed at strengthening participatory governance and youth-led community development. During the programme, the project’s overall objectives, key activities, and expected results were presented, followed by partner contributions outlining their respective roles and responsibilities in the implementation of EMPATY.

Participants took part in focused planning sessions facilitated by Hilfswerk International experts, addressing operational frameworks, indicators, and measurement methodologies across all five project outputs. The agenda also covered approaches to implementation, internal monitoring, and evaluation to ensure effective and transparent project delivery.

EMPATY aims to enhance the resilience, professionalism, and influence of civil society organizations while empowering young people to actively participate in shaping the social and economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic. A strong emphasis is placed on multi-stakeholder cooperation as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable change.

The event was organized by the EMPATY consortium, led by Hilfswerk International, within the framework of the project “Empowered CSOs and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for an Active and Prosperous Civil Society and Young Generation in the Kyrgyz Republic (EMPATY),” co-funded by the European Union under the programme “Support to Civil Society Initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic” and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

Project implementation: Hilfswerk International, in close cooperation with PF Open Line, KGFRAS, and AFVE. For more information/participation, please contact the following e-mails: [aslanov@hilfswerk.tj](mailto:aslanov@hilfswerk.tj).

A project implemented



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This project is co-funded  
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The European Union is an economic and political union of 27 European countries. It is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It acts globally to promote sustainable development of societies,



The ADA is co-funding the project “*Empowered CSOs and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Active and Prosperous Civil Society and Young Generation in the Kyrgyz Republic – EMPATY*” as part of International Partnerships Austria. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is Austria’s federal agency for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. We collaborate with international organisations, public authorities, civil society, educational institutions and businesses across Africa, Asia, South East and Eastern Europe. Together with the people in our partner countries, we work to improve living conditions in their communities – for example, by providing education and training, by supporting small businesses, or by developing innovative solutions for water supply and agriculture. We are committed to reducing poverty, promoting peace and protecting the environment. For better lives and a secure future for all.



Hilfswerk International in Central Asia is an Austrian non-profit charitable organization promoting international cooperation. It has been operating in Central Asia since 2001, implementing projects and programs for agricultural development, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), projects in the social sector, and other priority areas for the development of the socio-economic sector of Central Asia

#### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:**



**ASSOCIATION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ENTERPRISES IN KYRGYZSTAN (AFVE)** was established in June 2003 and currently unites most fruit and vegetable enterprises in the country, developing the fruit and vegetable processing sector and enterprises by creating a favorable business environment and developing the market for processed products. The “Association of fruit and vegetable enterprises” is a non-governmental, non-profit organization uniting legal entities engaged in the production and processing of agricultural produce, based on free will and common interests.



**Association of Kyrgyzstan forum of rural advisory services (KGFRAS)** was established on September 10, 2019. Currently, the Association unites around 30 advisory service organizations across the Republic. The main activities of the Association are aimed at strengthening the capacity of advisory services working in the agricultural sector through training, promotion of their services, as well as protecting their rights and advocating for their interests before government bodies, public organizations, and the donor community.

KGFRAS is a non-governmental and non-profit organization that brings together legal entities on a voluntary basis, in accordance with their shared interests in rural development and advisory services.



**Open Line** is an educational organization working in the field of protecting the rights of girls and women. Our mission is to advance human rights content through advocacy campaigns, visualization, innovation, and information technologies.

We educate about the rights of girls and women through innovation and technology to expand horizons and opportunities:

- We promote increased gender competence and professional skills through the lens of fostering equal opportunities, enhancing effectiveness, and improving the quality of services provided by women-led enterprises, activist groups, and women's NGOs.
- We foster partnerships between professionals from marketing, media, and programming and women's organizations and entrepreneurs.
- We create innovative social campaigns and simple IT solutions so that ordinary girls and women can use them as motivational/educational/awareness-raising materials, particularly in difficult life situations, to protect their rights.