



## NEWSLETTER #1

### October – December, 2025

Welcome to the first issue of the *ETICA Newsletter*, published by the American University of Armenia (AUA) Center for Ethics in Public Affairs. The Center has been established with funding from the EU Horizon Europe programme and is led by European Research Area (ERA) Chair, Professor Maria Baghramian. Our work focuses on the ethical dimensions of public policy, governance, and social responsibility in Armenia and the broader region. This newsletter will keep you informed about our research activities, educational programs, collaborative partnerships, and outreach projects. In each issue, we will share updates on our work at the intersection of ethics and public life, highlighting our research activities and events on the moral questions facing contemporary society.



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**AUA** CENTER *for* ETHICS  
in PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# Newsletter #1

## 1. *Research-in-Progress Meetings*

The AUA Center for Ethics in Public Affairs Research-in-Progress (RIP) meeting series aims to foster a culture of collaborative research in philosophy in Armenia, encouraging critical engagement and dialogues between philosophers. RIP's ultimate goal is to provide support for peer-reviewed publications and conference papers by philosophers working in Armenia.

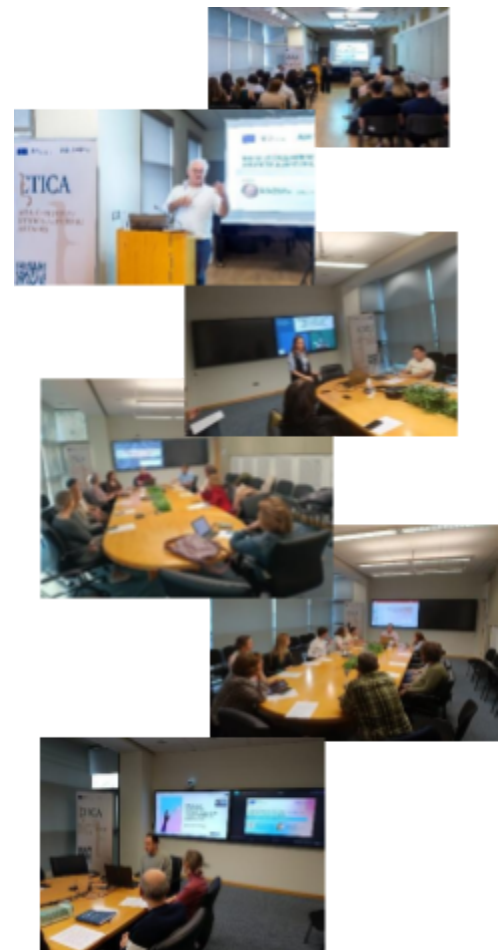
ETICA has hosted four RIP meetings since the beginning of the Project. Philosophers, social scientists, and Ph.D. students from various Armenian institutions were invited to both present their work in progress and to participate in seminars.

- The first ETICA RIP seminar was held on September 11 on the theme of intergenerational justice. During this seminar, Professor Axel Gosseries from UCLouvain and Dr. Levon Babajanyan from Yerevan State University discussed issues of intergenerational justice, such as harming currently non-existent future people, wrongful life, etc.

- Held on October 24, the next RIP seminar was on the theme of environmental justice. The speaker, Dr. Marina Kalashyan (Russian-Armenian University) presented the draft of her paper, titled "Toward environmental justice: Environmental rights beyond "Developmentalism" (an Armenian case study), which explores complex relations between environmental justice, environmental rights, developmentalism and its extractivist forms, as well as relevant aspects of Armenian legal framework and the Amulsar case. The meeting continued with discussions led by respondent, Dr. Arshak Balayan (American University of Armenia), followed by a Q&A session.

- Held on November 17, the third RIP seminar was on Dr. Davit Mosinyan's paper, provisionally titled "The subject of collective forgiveness and the problem of the existence of post-genocide societies." Dr. Mosinyan (Yerevan State University) discussed theories of collective forgiveness and presented difficulties of conceiving a proper subject of collective forgiveness especially for wrongdoings performed by a previous generation. Dr. Sona Manusyan served as the respondent (Yerevan State University), providing a reaction to the speech, followed by a Q&A session.

- The last RIP seminar of 2025 was held on December 23. The speaker, Dr. Arman Gharagulyan (Yerevan State University), presented his current research on the moral status of artificial intelligence (AI). Defending a functionalist theory of the mind, Dr. Gharagulyan argued in favor of a possibility of AI that is comparable to a human mind in certain moral respects, despite being non-biological and lacking feelings. The speaker then explored humans' duties toward such



## Newsletter #1

intelligence. The meeting continued with a response from Dr. Karine Yaralyan (Yerevan State University) and concluded with a Q&A session.

The monthly Research-in-Progress series will resume in February 2026. Philosophers across Armenian universities as well as those visiting the country are welcome to attend and contribute. Researchers in other fields interested in organizing similar events are invited to contact [etica@aua.am](mailto:etica@aua.am) for guidance and support.

### 2. *Philosophy Cafés*

Philosophy cafés are grassroots fora for philosophical discussion, founded by philosopher Marc Sautet in Paris, France on December 13, 1992. The concept is to bring people together in a friendly public space, where they can discuss philosophical ideas. A café tends to have an atmosphere where people can relax over coffee while engaging in meaningful conversations.

ETICA started organizing Philosophy Cafés to make philosophy more accessible to Armenian students by creating an informal, public space for friendly, open dialogue about life's big questions and current issues. Through Philosophy Cafés, we hope to foster interest in philosophy, contribute to the development of critical thinking, and give voice to younger intellectuals by creating a community of thoughtful and self-reflective people. To this date, ETICA has organized three Philosophy Cafés.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Philosophy Café** organized by ETICA was held on October 27, 2025. 20 AUA students had the opportunity to engage in a philosophical discussion on hope.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Philosophy Café** was held on November 14, 2025. It brought together more than 20 AUA students to discuss free will and determinism.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Philosophy Cafe** was held on December 18, 2025. Unlike the previous two cafés, this one was held in Armenian. More than 20 students from the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology of Yerevan State University discussed theories of well-being.



The monthly Philosophy Cafés will resume in February 2026. All those interested in participating or hosting similar events, are invited to contact [etica@aua.am](mailto:etica@aua.am), using the subject line "Philosophy Café."

### ***3. Workshops on Horizon Europe Grant Writing***

The Horizon Europe Grant Writing workshops aim to support researchers and research managers in writing and managing grants, to disseminate information on upcoming funding opportunities with a strategic focus on Horizon Europe/FP10, and to share information on best practices in grant writing and management by leveraging the expertise of the ERA chair, team members, and national and international experts. In total, three workshops were organized since the launch of the Project.



- The first event, titled “Horizon Europe: AUA’s success stories and best practices,” was held on May 27, 2025. The speakers, Professor Maria Baghramian, Alen Amirkhanian, and Dr. Jenny Knell introduced the audience to the PERITIA project implemented by AUA. They provided advice on finding call topics, partnering, and navigating the EU funding and tender portals, as well as introduced the ERA chair and the ETICA project mission.
- On October 22, 2025, the “Horizon Europe Information Event” was hosted in collaboration with the SIPAC Foundation. Silvia Bojinova, invited speaker from the European Commission,, alongside the SIPAC Chairman and NCP Coordinator Mr. Tigran Arzumanyan introduced Good Practice Cases and Integration to the European Research Area (ERA) and participation in Horizon Europe. Subsequently, Mariana Sargsyan, head of the International Relations Department of the Higher Education and Science Committee of Armenia spoke about activities aimed toward integration into the European Research Area. The event’s second session started with sharing experiences from participation in Horizon Europe Projects, featuring speeches by Alen Amirkhanian and Professor Maria Baghramian. The session also featured invited speakers from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and other attendees, and was followed by a concluding Q&A session.
- The hybrid workshop on “Horizon Europe Widening programs 2026-2027” was organized by ETICA on November 27, 2025, for a wider audience. Participants represented different organizations, including the Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, private organizations, and other institutions.

### ***4. Launch of the ETICA Website***

The [ETICA website](#) was launched in November 2025. Serving as a dynamic hub for the Center’s research, events, and public outreach efforts, it incorporates information on Project’s mission, goals, and activities. The website highlights the Project conferences, research-in-progress meetings, and philosophy cafés, as well as Horizon Europe funding seminars and other events. All the materials produced within the ETICA project are also available on the website.

### *5. International Conferences*

The inaugural international conference of the ETICA project, entitled “National Identity in a Time of Crisis,” took place on June 29–30, 2025 at AUA. It served as the first major scientific and public-facing activity of the AUA Center for Ethics in Public Affairs.

The two-day event convened over 60 Armenian and international scholars, including six keynote speakers, and attracted nearly 200 attendees from Armenia. The speakers examined the ethical, political, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of national identity in the context of ongoing global and regional crises, with particular relevance to Armenia and the wider South Caucasus. The conference was co-funded by the Horizon Europe ETICA project, the New York University Global Institute for Advanced Study, and the AUA Turpanjian Institute of the Social Sciences. It was also supported by the Armenian Society of Fellows (ASOF).

The abstracts of accepted submissions are available on the [ETICA website](#).

The conference was officially launched on June 28, with an opening reception at the State Philharmonia of Armenia.

Across the two days, the conference’s full programme featured five parallel morning sessions, during which 48 peer-reviewed papers were presented. Topics included national identities under political influence; the relationship between violence, culture, and national identity; identity in time and space; as well as ethics, memory, and post-conflict societies.

Two podcast episodes related to the conference are presented below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqp9ZSP9jIU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqp9ZSP9jIU>

The international conference on the theme of “Trust and Hope in Times of Crises” will be held on June 22-23, 2026. The event is organized by ETICA in collaboration with the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, the Armenian Philosophical Academy, and Yerevan State University.

The call for abstracts is open now and available [here](#).

## Newsletter #1

### 6. *First and Second Volumes of ETICA Yearbook*

On November 17, ETICA launched the first volume of its flagship publication, *ETICA: A Yearbook of Ethics and Public Affairs*, marking a significant milestone for the Center. The celebration also featured the unveiling of ETICA's official website ([etica.aua.am](http://etica.aua.am)), further strengthening the Center's presence and accessibility to the academic community and the wider public. Co-edited by Professor Maria Baghramian and Dr. Arshak Balayan, and issued by AUA Press, the *Yearbook* published peer-reviewed academic articles in Armenian and in English. The debut volume focused on the theme of science, policy, and expertise, bringing together articles from Armenian and international contributors. More information is available [here](#).

Volume 2 of *ETICA*, to be published in September 2026, will focus on the topic of "National Identity in a Time of Crisis." The call for papers is open and available [here](#).



### 7. *Upcoming Events*

#### **Workshops**

The **inaugural ETICA workshop** and public lecture by [Professor Jonathan Wolff \(Oxford\)](#) will be held on April 21, 2026 at AUA. The workshop will cover themes in social theory and ethics in public affairs drawing on Professor Wolff's extensive research in these fields. The workshop will bring together scholars from Armenia and neighboring countries as well as from across the globe. It will be followed by a public lecture on the theme of "Social Trust and the Role of Government" to be held at Yerevan State University on April 20.

Another **workshop, entitled "Ethics of Data Collection,"** will be held on May 7, 2026. [Professor Morgenstern](#) from Sorbonne Nouvelle University, who also serves as the Vice-Rector for European Affairs and is a member of the University's Research Ethics Committee, will be the lead speaker for this workshop.

## Newsletter #1

### ***Symposium “The Public and Its Problems: Philosophical Responses to New Challenges”***

Call for Proposals:

“The Public and Its Problems: Philosophical Responses to New Challenges”

June 15 and 16, 2026

The American University of Armenia (AUA) and its Center for Ethics in Public Affairs (ETICA) will hold a symposium on the theme “The Public and Its Problems: Philosophical Responses to New Challenges.” The year 2026 marks the one hundredth anniversary of John Dewey’s lectures at Kenyon College that served as the basis of his 1927 book, *The Public and Its Problems*. The symposium will take place on June 15 and 16, 2026 on AUA’s campus in Yerevan, Armenia.

In his lectures and his book, Dewey responded to the highly influential critique lodged by Walter Lippmann against popular self-governance. Lippman argued that an uninformed and manipulatable public often elects leaders whose policies fail to promote its interests. He advocated for expert rule or what some today identify as rule by a technocratic intellectual elite, while on the other hand, Dewey argued for a reconceptualized public that could intelligently grapple with the problems of inequality, corruption, and social polarization.

Participants are welcome to submit abstracts (250-500 words) on any broadly related philosophical topic. Submissions need not address the Dewey-Lippmann debate directly. Presentations should be 25 minutes long with 15-20 minutes for discussion. Presentations will be in English, and participants are encouraged to share papers in advance to assist non-native English speakers. A welcome event will take place on the evening of Sunday, June 14 with the symposium ending by early afternoon on Tuesday, June 16. Participants of the Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF) in Bratislava (June 8–12) are especially encouraged to apply. Symposium dates were chosen to facilitate participation in both events. The initial deadline for abstracts is April 1st.

For those who would like to stay longer and participate in the “International conference on the theme of “Trust and Hope in Times of Crises” (June 22-23, 2026), the deadline for abstracts is at the American University of Armenia (AUA), organized by the AUA Center for Ethics in Public Affairs (ETICA) in association with the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) and the Armenian Philosophical Academy, and Yerevan State University (YSU), the deadline for abstracts is January 30, 2026. Details can be found at <https://etica.aua.am/events/trust-and-hope-in-a-time-of-crisis/>. A limited number of travel grants will be available, in part, courtesy of the journal *Metaphilosophy*. Work on organizing the symposium was facilitated by a Fulbright Scholar Award to Armen Marsoobian.

Direct flights are available from either Bratislava (Wizz Air) or Vienna (Austrian Airlines) at a price range of 180 to 650 Euros return. Many other European cities provide direct flights to Yerevan (EVN). Connecting flights are also available from North America and Asia. Very reasonably priced accommodations are available near the university. Reduced hotel rates for

## Newsletter #1

conference participants are available. Yerevan is a very affordable city, especially when compared to European and North American cities. Sightseeing will be arranged depending upon the interest of the participants. The weather in mid-June is ideal for sightseeing.

For further information, please contact Armen Marsoobian at [amarsoobian@aua.am](mailto:amarsoobian@aua.am) or [marsoobiana1@southernct.edu](mailto:marsoobiana1@southernct.edu).

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*WELCOME TO 2026*

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# Newsletter #1

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