

EU Co-operation News

Bi-weekly newsletter of the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine
Project on Information and PR Activities for the EU and its Programmes in Ukraine

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EU-UKRAINE CO-OPERATION IN THE SME SECTOR

Most jobs in the EU are provided for by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) – companies of 250 employees or less. As such, creating a better business environment for SMEs is a key goal of the EU's Lisbon Strategy and the European Partnership for Growth and Employment.

In June this year the European Commission adopted the Small Business Act for Europe aimed at making Europe more entrepreneurial and helping its businesses thrive by improving framework conditions for SMEs while taking full account of their diversity.

For EU-Ukraine relations, SMEs have long been a key sector for co-operation. The EU-Ukraine Action Plan commits partners to working together to develop the Ukrainian legislative and administrative framework for SME promotion.

Currently the EU is supporting the ongoing project "Support to the Development of Business Capacity of Ukrainian SMEs – International Dimension" which will run until August 2009 (see below). The objectives of this project are to improve State policy in the sphere of SME support development, to facilitate commercial links between Ukrainian and with EU companies and to increase awareness of business internationalisation in the public and SME sector.

This follows on from project such as the "SME Support Services in Priority Regions" project which ended in January. This project also supported the development of a policy environment conducive for SME growth in Ukraine.

Other projects have included the "Turn Around Management Programme (TAM): Support to the Private Sector and Assistance for Economic Development in Ukraine" which ended in June this year (December 2005 – June 2008). This project aimed to contribute to economic reform and development by assisting in the creation of a thriving, entrepreneurial SME business sector.

The "Ukraine SME Policy Development Project 2005-2008" and the "Improving of SME Environment 2003-2005" projects, have also contributed to the improvement of conditions for SMEs in Ukraine. The projects lobbied for the reform of the system of business permits in order to bring Ukrainian practice into line with contemporary European standards. The projects assisted the government to draft a Law on the System of Permits, in order to improve the permits system by abolishing about 1000 unnecessary permits.

Additional projects to assist the SME sector have included: "Business infrastructure in Odessa oblast", "Improvement of Logistics Services and Marketing Channels for SMEs in Agriculture" and "Support to SMEs in the Rural Sector".



ANOTHER STEP TO CO-OPERATION

EU-FUNDED PROJECT ORGANISES STUDY TOUR TO TURKEY IN SUPPORT OF SMALL ENTERPRISES POLICIES

Ten staff from the State Committee of Ukraine for Regulatory Policy and Entrepreneurship (SCURPE) and two other Ukrainian organisations went on a study visit to Turkey on 19 - 26 October, organised by the EU Project on Support to the Development of Business Capacity of Ukrainian SMEs – International Dimension.

The study tour provided its participants with information and experience of the development and implementation of SME policy in Turkey, the support provided for innovative and hi-tech businesses and the role played by national and regional support organisations in one of the EU candidate countries.

The institutions visited by the group – in Ankara, Istanbul, Marmara and Bursa – are all part of an efficiently functioning and well-connected network of government, public and private organisations. Visits were also made to three Turkish Technoparks, an Automotive R&D Centre and two EU-funded projects involved in cluster policy and business centre development.

Participants in the study tour were able to improve their understanding of the structure and format of SME policy and legislation in Turkey. They increased capacity to analyse and identify SME support models relevant to the Ukrainian context and to contribute to the development and implementation of effective SME policy in Ukraine. →



➔ Direct contacts were established between the study tour participants and over 20 Turkish senior experts in: SME policy and support instruments, innovation and technology policy/programmes, export promotion policy and support instruments, industrial development support programmes. Profiles of 26 Ukrainian software companies were given to the Technoparks and the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce as a first step in finding ‘partner’ companies.

This was the fourth out of five study tours planned by the Project. Three other study tours already took place to Poland, Germany and Hungary in February, April and September 2008. The fifth and final study tour to the UK, is planned for February 2009

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

EU-COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT HOLDS ROUNDTABLE ON CORRUPTION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE SECTOR

On 16th October, the joint EU-Council of Europe project "Support to Good Governance: project against corruption in Ukraine" organised a roundtable on the role of the civil society and private sector in the national anti-corruption efforts.

This event brought together representatives of the civil society and private sector from Kyiv and regions of Ukraine as well as officials from various state institutions and Council of Europe experts. The roundtable participants discussed ways to strengthen the role of the civil society and private sector against corruption and reviewed the effectiveness of the national anticorruption strategy and action plan in line with GRECO recommendations and international standards.

The debate emphasised the need to reinforce the involvement of the Ukrainian civil society in anti-corruption measures in order to ensure the success and sustainability of the national anticorruption policy. Moreover, the participants called for a better cooperation between the civil society/private sector and the government as well as for a growing contribution of mass media.

The three-year joint EU-Council of Europe project on Support to Good Governance: Project Against Corruption in Ukraine – UPAC aims at contributing to the prevention and the control of corruption in the political, judicial and administrative systems in Ukraine and reinforcing the public confidence in these systems.

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For more information, see: <http://www.coe.int/UPAC>



EU-UNDP PROJECT LAUNCHES NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN “NEW UKRAINIAN CONSUMER”

On 23 October the joint initiative of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme “Consumer Society and Citizen Networks” launched the first national consumer awareness campaign aimed at raising consumer activism among Ukrainian consumers.

This is the first large scale event to take place in Ukraine that brings up the question of how well consumers are informed about their rights and mechanisms of their protection. The campaign will last eight months and involve a large number of national and regional media.

The awareness campaign is supposed to encourage Ukrainian consumers to be more responsible towards the choice of products they buy and take active stance in protecting their violated consumer rights in case of buying faulty goods or services.

The main communication media will be TV and radio channels. Apart from public advertising, the campaign provides for a number of educational and interactive programmes, which will enable the consumers to directly participate in the process. Ukrainian consumers will also have a chance to see the main characters and messages of the campaign on posters in local trains and subways which will help to attract a wider target group.

The project also presented a Book of Complaints developed to enable consumers to leave their feedback on the reputable Consumer Portal www.consumerinfo.org.ua. By leaving a complaint on the web-page, a consumer can expect that his or her voice will be heard, since information about the claim will be filed to the producer or service provider whose products or services failed to meet expected standards.

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EU-COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT ON MEDIA CONSULTS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

On 29 October a one-day brainstorming session took place in Kyiv, bringing together representatives of regional Ukrainian civil society organisations, the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine and the Council of Europe. The event took place within the framework of the "Promotion of European standards in the Ukrainian Media environment" project, co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Representatives of the project beneficiary, the National Commission for Freedom of Speech and Development of the Information Sector welcomed participants.



One of the aims of the project is to facilitate dialogue between local authorities, civil society and the media on public policy concerns. The objective of this meeting was to discuss the framework for policy dialogue in six regions of Ukraine; Rivne, Kherson, Sumy, Cherkasy, Donetsk and Chernivtsi. Participants identified the motivations of each side in the relationship and what obstacles currently exist to fully implementing this highly valuable tool. The lively discussion was ably facilitated by the GURT Resource Centre using an open space format. As a result of the meeting, participants were able to prioritise areas of intervention and make suggestions for a range of activities to be implemented in order to achieve the newly-defined goals. These outputs will now be systematized and will lead to a detailed action plan which will be implemented by the project's regional partners, the Centres for Social Partnership.

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

6 November 2008, Kyiv

Closing conference for EU-funded project "INTERPOL-assisted International Cooperation in Criminal Matters by Ukrainian Law-enforcement"; opening ceremony of training centre provided by the project at the Kyiv National University of Internal Affairs.

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6-7 November 2008, Kyiv

Mid term conference organised by the EU-funded project "Support to Secondary Health Care reform" with the Ministry of Health of Ukraine

For more information see: http://www.delukr.ec.europa.eu/press_releases.html?id=49196

11 November 2008, Cherkaska oblast

Seminar for authorities of pilot rayons selected for participation in the EU-UNDP project on Community based approach to local development.

Heads of village councils and local media will participate in the event.

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14 November 2008, Lviv, 17 November 2008, Kharkiv and 19 November 2008, Kyiv

Workshops on Strategy and Marketing Planning

The workshops will be organised by the EU-funded project on Support to the Development of Business Capacity of Ukrainian SMEs for managers of Ukrainian woodworking, mechanical engineering and IT enterprises.

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17 November 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

3rd Steering Committee meeting of the EU project on Environmental Collaboration for the Black Sea

EC representatives, representatives of the Ministries of Environment in Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and Moldova, project management and key experts will take part in the event.

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18 November 2008, Lviv

Press-tour for Ukrainian journalists to Lviv factory of decorations. Training on quality and safety of toys

The events will be organised by the EU-UNDP Consumer Society and Citizen Networks project.

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