



EUROPEAN COMMISSION PLEDGES €110 MILLION TO COMPLETE SAFETY WORK ON CHERNOBYL SITE

On Tuesday 19th April, 25 years after the tragic Chernobyl accident, EU Commissioner Andris Piebalgs announced the European Commission's pledge of around €110 million at a high-level conference in Kiev to ensure that the Chernobyl site is made stable and environmentally safe. The Commission has so far committed a lion's share – some €470 million – to Chernobyl-related projects, mainly for nuclear safety, but also on programmes to help the local population and provide affected families with access to quality healthcare. Out of the €740 million needed to complete the major projects on the site by 2015, €550 million were promised by the international community.



At the Pledging Conference, Commissioner Piebalgs said: "The recent accident at Fukushima in Japan shows that nuclear safety remains a critical issue. ... Today's pledge is a big step forward in helping to meet the funding shortfall, and sends a clear signal that the Commission is committed to doing all it can to ensure that Chernobyl is made safe, both for the local people and the environment".

Commissioner Piebalgs visited Chernobyl and the EU-funded projects the same day. The General Director of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Igor Gramotkin, greeted him with positive words: "All EU-funded projects have been successful here. ... EU trust in our organisation is very valuable to us". He also expressed his appreciation for the EU's focus on specific difficult problems, such as the disposal of solid radiowaste.

The following day, Commissioner Piebalgs attended the high profile conference "Twenty-Five Years after the Chernobyl Disaster. Safety for the Future", together with UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, among others. The Ukrainian Minister for Emergencies, Mr. Baloga, greeted the Commissioner, praising his personal commitment to Ukraine: "You are one of the persons who brings the EU closer to Ukraine". In his opening speech, Piebalgs expressed hope in a brighter future: "Twenty-five years on, Chernobyl still casts a shadow. But little by little we have been moving out of that shadow to a brighter place. Let's ensure together that we can leave that shadow ever further behind".

What will the new pledge be used for?

The new pledge will be used mainly to complete the New Safe Confinement – a giant arch structure which will cover the damaged Chernobyl unit 4, to isolate it and to allow its deconstruction in the future. The scale of the structure is unprecedented and, once built, the arch will be long enough to cover almost two football pitches and high enough to house the Statue of Liberty. The pledge will also help to complete the construction of the Spent Fuel Storage Facility, which, once built, will store the spent fuel from the units which remained in operation after the accident, which is required for the decommissioning of the plant.

EU support to make the Chernobyl site safer

In the wake of the Chernobyl accident, the European Commission has been working to improve nuclear safety and to deal with legacy of the disaster. Key achievements in the Commission's work so far (largely through the Chernobyl Shelter Fund and the Nuclear Safety Account international funds) have been the stabilisation of the existing shelter, the implementation of infrastructure which meets international health regulations and provides the best possible protection for on-site workers and the construction of facilities in view of future decommissioning.

In addition to contributions to the international funds managed by the EBRD (the Chernobyl Shelter Fund and the Nuclear Safety Account) the Commission has funded projects to study, assess and mitigate the consequences of the accident. It has also provided its own contribution to the radioactive waste management projects needed for the restoration of the site. Crucially, the actions already implemented have created the conditions that have made the start of the construction of the New Safe Confinement possible.



EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

FIRST TIME EU SUSTAINABLE ENERGY WEEK IN UKRAINE – ENERGY DAYS IN KIEV

On 14–15 April 2011, the EU Delegation organized Information Days on Energy Efficiency in Kiev, during Ukraine's first European Union Sustainable Energy Week, Europe's key event for a more sustainable energy future.

During the first of the two days, the Conference "Energy Efficiency – Experiences from Ukrainian and EU cities" helped raise energy efficiency issues at municipal level.

The conference gathered about 100 participants: city mayors and local administration in charge of energy and heat supply, representatives from the Association of Small towns in Ukraine, NGOs and the European and Ukrainian experts from the EU Funded projects targeting Energy Efficiency at city level.

The participants had an opportunity to gain knowledge and information from EU-funded projects, international financial institutions and donor organizations, working to improve energy efficiency. They exchanged experiences of concrete steps and actions they have taken to support energy renewal and saving in their own city/town, and best practice on how to increase their citizens' knowledge, awareness and attitude towards energy saving.

A round table discussion brought together Governmental officials, representatives from NGOs and business sector and media around the topic: "Ukraine as an Energy Efficiency country: housing and communal services, reducing of energy consumption, changing behavior".

The EU announced the "[Covenant of Mayors- East" project and a new Call for proposals for small Ukrainian cities and for pilot projects within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors initiative. An exhibition of EU-Ukrainian and Ukrainian NGO projects implementing energy saving technology took place throughout the day.

On 15th April 2011, "Energy Day" opened its doors to all those interested. It gave citizens the opportunity to learn ways of energy renewal and saving.

Within the larger EU Sustainable Energy Week, Between 11 and 15 April Kyiv, Lviv, Poltava and Kovel hosted events to show, promote, discuss and celebrate energy efficiency and renewable energy.

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COVENANT OF MAYORS GOING EAST – €2.5 MILLION CALL FOR PROPOSALS PUBLISHED

On 14th April 2011, the European Union published a €2.5 million call for proposals for the Covenant of Mayors Going East - Supporting the participation of Eastern Partnership and Central Asian cities in the Covenant of Mayors project. The publication reference of the Call is EuropeAid/131258/C/ACT/Multi.

The global objective of the Call for Proposals is to support local authorities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to reduce their dependency on fossil fuels, to improve security of their energy supply, and to allow them to contribute more actively to climate change mitigation.

The specific objective is to encourage and support local authorities in the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries to implement a more sustainable local energy policy. The project supports cities that have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors.

In substance, the purpose of this call for proposals is to provide for a concrete contribution to the preparation and implementation of the Covenant-related Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) as well as to assist Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders to address commitments of their city under the Covenant of Mayors. Grants awarded under this Call for Proposals must fall between a minimum amount of €300,000 and a maximum of €500,000. The deadline for the submission of proposals is 22 July 2011

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MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE CONSIDER ADOPTION OF "TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT" CUSTOMS MODEL

During 13-14 April 2011, the implementation of a customs model that could significantly improve the way companies conduct business in Moldova and Ukraine was discussed during tri-lateral meetings at EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) headquarters in Odessa.

The 'Authorized Economic Operators' (AEO) concept is an international customs model, endorsed by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and World Trade Organisation, which seeks to refine the customs process, including promotion of trust and transparency and a reduction in trade restrictions and delays. It has already been introduced by many customs administrations around the world, with 161 of 176 WCO members either having already implemented or expressed their intention to implement the concept.

The benefits arising from AEO certification were presented to customs officials from Moldova and Ukraine by Ms Tonka Kostadinova, Policy Officer of Risk Management and Security at the European Commission body, DG TAXUD. Additionally, Mr Tomasz Michalak, the Director of the Customs Policy Department at the Polish Ministry of Finance, outlined the Polish experience in introducing the AEO concept in Poland.

AEO certification would confer significant corporate credibility on businesses in Moldova and Ukraine, and provide a more transparent and efficient business environment in which to trade.

Essentially, AEO certified companies would benefit from a reduction in time-consuming customs procedures. The model would contribute to the goal of supply chain security, introduce clarity over legitimate trading practice, and encourage economic operators to modernize their business practices.

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EUROPEAN UNION LEADS MONITORING OF DETENTION CONDITIONS IN UKRAINE

On 12 April 2011, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Ukraine in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOI) of Ukraine, organized the seventh Observatory Mechanism (OM) monitoring visit to the MOI-administered Migrant Accommodation Centre (MAC) in Rozsudiv, Chernihiv Region.

The OM is a tool for conducting joint assessments of standards compliance and quality control at the MACs and Temporary Holding Facilities (THFs) for irregular migrants in Ukraine that addresses Ukraine's commitments under EU-Ukraine strategic partnership documents. The OM tool, successfully introduced in 2009, aims to ensure that detention conditions continuously comply with international standards and that migrants' rights in detention are observed.

25 participants representing the state authorities (MOI, Administration of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, Security Service, Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, Chernihiv Circuit Administrative Court, Office of the Ombudsman), diplomatic missions (Embassies of France, Hungary, Norway, Canada, Germany and Sweden), as well as international (IOM, UNHCR) and non-governmental organizations (Danish Refugee Council and a local NGO), toured the premises, met the migrants, and discussed the findings during a debriefing session. The participants discussed the cooperation of the MAC administration and civil society under the EU-funded projects, the asylum issues in the context of the MACs, and challenges in the field of migrant accommodation.



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THE FINAL STAGE OF CONTEST "ON THE TRACKS OF HISTORY"

On 8th April 2011, the 8th Ukrainian history contest of school students' research works "On the Tracks of History" concluded. Entitled "Ukraine as a New Life Shore. Migrations in History of Ukraine", the competition selected and its winners.

An awarding ceremony celebrated the 30 winners, together with schoolchildren from different regions of Ukraine, teachers and invited honored guests from the Ministry for Education and Science of Ukraine, Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, National Academy of Science and other state and civil organizations.

From 1st September till 15th February 2011, 2130 schoolchildren took part in the contest and 140 projects were received from different regions of Ukraine.

The contest has been held by the All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies "Nova Doba" in the framework of EUSTORY, the History Network for Young Europeans.

In 2010-2011 the contest is organised within frame of project "Multicultural history of Ukraine" funded by the European Union.

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EUROPEAN UNION AND UNICEF HELP TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN UKRAINE

On 7th April 2011, the Khmelnytsky Oblast State Administration hosted a meeting to evaluate the progress of the joint European Union (EU) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported Action "Development of Gatekeeping Policies and Systems for Institutionalized and Other Vulnerable Children".

Aiming to protect the rights of institutionalized children and other vulnerable children in the pilot Khmelnytsky Oblast, the Action is also developing related national regulations. International experience suggests that the success of reforming child care systems largely depends on the efficiency of preventive social work with vulnerable families with children at the community level.

This Action is a part of the European Union's strategy in Ukraine to consolidate and protect women's and children's rights. The Action has already helped to improve the state programme for in-service training of foster parents and parents of family-type children homes, to draft standards of social work for prevention of abandonment of new-born babies and young children, and to develop proposals for improving prevention and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.

The Khmelnytsky Oblast social workers have already analysed the situation of about 350 children, and will involve in total 500, helping to place as many as possible from institutions into families.

By the end of 2011, the Action will analyse costs associated with different forms of care of children in state care, and will help to develop evidence based proposals for improving functional coordination between different government bodies responsible for taking decisions on vulnerable families and children.

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A JOINT BORDER MONITORING MISSION IS CONDUCTED BY EU-FUNDED REGIONAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

On 5th April 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under EU-funded Regional Protection Programme, conducted a joint border monitoring mission with the State Border Guard Services and the organization of NEEKA to the temporary holding facilities in Lviv and Mostyska border detachment in the western Lviv region bordering with Poland.

The meetings and briefing sessions on refugee protection considerations in mixed migration and readmission were conducted during the mission with commanding and operational border guard officers at the aforementioned border and detention venues.

In 2010, some 240 persons were reported to have been apprehended in the Mostyska for illegal border crossing into/from Poland of which 30 persons were third country nationals originated mostly from Irak, Iran, Cameroon, Kongo and the Russian Federation. The mission followed by a training session for 14 lawyers on protection monitoring from UNHCR NGO partners and IOM. The session focused on the harmonization of border and detention monitoring tools, reporting mechanisms, cross-border cooperation with NGOs on the other side of the border, providing legal counseling and assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees and particularly, for those in detention”.

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WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

On 29th March 2011, the EU financed project “Complementary Technical Assistance to the EU Funded Budget Support to Ukraine’s Energy Strategy Implementation” and the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine jointly organized a workshop “International Experience in Energy Efficiency”.

The leading countries of energy-saving technologies presented their experiences in energy efficiency. Top EU experts described energy efficiency legislation in the EU, practical steps and best practices in EU Member States. Together with their Ukrainian colleagues, they examined measures to improve energy efficiency and to lead to an energy efficient economy in Ukraine, including mechanisms to implement energy efficiency policies and technologies. This will lead to Ukraine’s full membership in the Energy Community.



The event gathered nearly 25 representatives of the project, the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine, State Agency for Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving, NJSC “Energy Company of Ukraine”, JSC “Ukrhydroenergo” and SFTC “Ukrinterenergo”.

More information at: www.esbs.kiev.ua

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

13 MAY 2011, KHERSON

Final conference for NGO` "New Generation" project "Child's Rights in Action" funded by the European Union. The EU-funded European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) provided the grant for the project, through an annual call for proposal.

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14 MAY 2011, MYKOLAIV

Europe Day in Ukraine

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