



EU DELEGATION NEWSLETTER
JUNE-JULY 2015
EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS IN AZERBAIJAN

REGIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



On 16 July a joint press-conference was held by the Minister of Agriculture and the EU Head of Delegation on the successful completion of the **Agriculture and Rural Development Support Programme (ARDSP)**. This important sector budget support program (14 million EURO) has supported the Government of Azerbaijan from 2012 to 2015 in the areas of food security, food safety and phytosanitary

controls. A short film about the ARDSP and the key results achieved was screened during the event. The film can be downloaded: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSXnF6M37nM>

On 18-19 June the "Power to Women" a project partly funded by the EU and Konrad Adenauer Foundation organised training courses "Be Entrepreneur". Two specialists explained main notions of entrepreneurship in the 2 day training. The training was held for women interested in entrepreneurship. 2 year project is implemented in five rural zones of Azerbaijan: Aran, Ganja-Qazax, Lankaran-Astara, Quba-Khachmaz, Shaki-Zaqatala and also in Baku. The specific objective of the project is to improve the capacity of women in the rural areas to participate in both socio economic and political life and to play an active role in the decision making process.



Small scale strawberry farming is one of the agricultural activities supported by the **EU-funded LIFE – Local Innovations for Farmers’ Empowerment in the Gabala, Ismayilli, Oghuz and Sheki regions**. The specific objective of this project is to support 2500 poor rural people, including 15% internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 25 villages to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. Until June, 110 farmers have been provided with knowledge about new methods and technologies of strawberry growing, including the use of more productive seedlings. Before planting strawberry seedlings soil samples were taken from each field for analysis. Then 70.000 productive strawberry seedlings were bought from Jalilabad region and distributed among the farmers. The planted sort is not only more productive than the one commonly used, but also cold-resistant, fragrant and delicious. By June, 90 farmers have established strawberry fields by using the new methods and technologies they learned. Growing strawberries could be considered a profitable business for women farmers.



On June 12 an exchange visit was held in Sumgait with participation of 19 farmers from rural communities within the European Union funded **“Rural Sustainable Development Initiative”** project implemented by "Umid" Support to Social Development Public Union. During the meeting, head and specialists of "Farash Agro" LLC provided detailed information about the importance of the food given to plants through a drip irrigation system

In order to support the creation of a new geographical database of agricultural land in Azerbaijan, photointerpretation guidelines were prepared and a four-day training of staff from Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant institutions (20 persons) provided by Mr. Pavel Trojáček in June and July. The training covered the basic principles of Land Parcel Identification Systems (LPIS) in Europe and photointerpretation rules, the presentation of newly prepared photointerpretation guidelines and practical training in photointerpretation of digital orthoimages.



On 2 July 2015 an expert mission to National Food Authorities carried out by the European Food Safety Authority took place. This mission is organised under the **EFSA European Neighbourhood Programme 2014-2016** (Programme), financed by the European Commission (EC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan Republic. The overall objective of the Programme is to promote the understanding of EFSA's work, share expertise and create information exchange mechanisms.

The aim of the mission was to exchange knowledge and best practice in risk assessment, risk management and risk communication in the field of food safety.



On **July 02** a workshop was held in Guba to present the achievements of the EU funded **“Rural Sustainable Development Initiative”** project. Municipality Head, ExCom representatives, Community Development Council and community members of target communities, successful completers of Apprenticeship courses were among the participants to the workshop. During the meeting details on conducted activities and achievements gained were

presented, while successful completers of vocational courses on Apprenticeship component made speeches. Youth shared their views on their skills gained during the vocational courses and profits they gained in the newly opened service fields. A presentation was made on organized training and round tables, implemented projects, success of vocational course completers, contributions to the development of agriculture and the benefits of joint cooperation with RSDI, SEDA, AzRIP and Embassy of Japan within this project.



TAIEX workshop on land consolidation and development of agricultural holdings was organised on **7-8 July** in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. Four European experts from the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Bulgaria presented best practice examples of land consolidation processes in EU member states and discussed possible options for Azerbaijan.

EDUCATION



10 projects with participation of Azerbaijani universities were shortlisted in the last call for proposals under the **EU Erasmus Plus** program. Capacity-building in Higher Education is part of the Erasmus+ programme, which aims to support the modernisation, accessibility and internationalisation of higher education in EU Partner Countries. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency is currently carrying out the selection process for applications. The total available budget for Joint Projects and Structural Projects to be selected under this Call for Proposals is 125.8 M EURO, which corresponds to approximately 136 projects.

COURSE AIM is to give participants an introduction to the European Union. Participants gain a broad insight into the historical development and the economic, social, political dimensions of the European integration process as well as into Europe's role as an international political and economic agent. The program will foster the participants' interactive engagement by offering lectures and workshops.

COURSE CONTENT offers an overview to

- EU fundamental aspects, as EU Basics, EU strategies, EU institutions
- Human rights Protections and the Single Market
- EU negotiations, presentations and communication skills
- The current and future tasks of the EU

Target Group for the EU summer school are:
Local or foreign graduate and undergraduate university students, researchers, professionals and individuals interested in EU related issues, civil servants dealing with EU Affairs

APPLY ONLINE!
APPLICATION DEADLINE:
MAY 15, 2015

11 Ahmadbay Aghaoglu Street | Baku, Azerbaijan | AZ1005
Phone: (+994 12) 497 20 63 | Web: www.ada.edu.az
Contact Person: Ail Mammadova, Project Assistant, Centre of Excellence in EU Studies | amammadova@ada.edu.az

The EU Summer School at ADA University is held on **13-24 July** within the framework of the EU funded project "**Support to Civil Service EU trainings and establishment of a Centre of Excellence in EU matters in Azerbaijan**". The 25 selected participants to the Summer School benefit from an intensive eight-day programme to give them a solid primary understanding of the main policy areas of the EU. Distinguished scholars and experts from research and policy sectors will discuss a wide range of EU related topics, such as: the history and governance of the EU History, the European Neighbourhood Policy, Foreign Policy. By the end of this programme, participants should have a rich overall understanding of EU processes and the ability to utilize the acquired skill-set for further professional purposes. At the end of the two-week course, participants were asked to write a 1000 word report on "The Future of the EU".

SOCIAL PROTECTION



The Twinning project **“Support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population for the development of a system for medical-social rehabilitation of people with disabilities”** (France/Germany, 24 months, total budget 1.1 million EUR) held an event on **3 June** chaired by deputy Minister Natiq Mammadov. During the event, the project’s mid-term achievements were highlighted. These include: i) the development and adoption of a strategy and master plan for the development of a comprehensive model

of social rehabilitation and integration which empowers people with disabilities to participate more actively in in the life of the communities in which they live; ii) the preparation of a draft law on “rights of people with disabilities”, iii) the piloting of the socio-medical approach to disability in two rehabilitation centres (Sumqayt and Shagan), iv) the training of staff of key stakeholders (including staff from the Ministry, NGOs and pilot medical rehabilitation centres); and v) the strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation system for the medico-social rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

From **June 8 to 12** experts from the Ministry of Welfare of Republic of Latvia (MoW) and German Association for Social Security Policy and Research worked with the experts from the State Social Protection Fund of Azerbaijan within the EU funded Twinning project **“Support to the State Social Protection Fund on the introduction of funded element within the insurance – pension system, establishment of non – state pension funds and development of legal framework for regulating their activity”** (Latvia/Germany) (duration 18 months, budget 750 thousand EUR). The objective of this mission was to continue the elaboration of pieces of legislation for the funded part of labour pension and for private pension funds based on the result of the previous mission.



CAPACITY BUILDING



GIZ, in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (CSC), launched the piloting of standard training curricula within the project “**Support to civil service training capacities with a focus on EU affairs**” co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - (BMZ). On 1-2 June, 17-18 and 23 June 2015, two trainings were

organized on “Training of Trainers (ToT)/Adult Learning”, which aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of potential trainers to roll out the developed curricula for civil servants in future, both in Baku and in the regions, and “Leadership skills” aiming to establish a better understanding of a leadership by identifying and discussing key skills and responsibilities required for a good leader. A third pilot training on "Team Building and Motivation" was held on 29 and 30 June.

On 10 June the 3rd Steering Committee meeting of the **EU-financed Twinning project “Support to the Ministry of Taxes of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MoT) in Human Resources Development”** (Spain/France, duration 24 months, budget 1 million EUR) took place. The meeting targeted the evaluation of the third quarter of the project implementation and discussed the plan for the next quarter. A survey to assess training needs for the MoT and its Education Centre staff has been launched and completed. Two guidelines (one for middle managers and other for top managers selection) were prepared: one of them was adopted by the Tax Minister and the other one is under discussion with the top management. The Azerbaijani delegation participated in the **study visit** which took place on **04-10 May 2015 in Spain**. The aim was to better understand how the Spanish Tax Agency and the Institute for Fiscal Studies function and to better appreciate the scope of their respective activities.

OTHERS

On 9 June - Transparency Azerbaijan, under the framework of the **EU funded regional project "National Integrity System Assessment in the ENP East countries"** held a roundtable event to launch a public discussion on the "Easy Business by ASAN service centres" concept paper proposed by Transparency Azerbaijan. In this paper, Transparency Azerbaijan makes a plea for ASAN service centers – which is currently a one-stop-shop for public service delivery - to also take on board private sector services through its one-window system.



Our **SUCCESS STORY** about **Turkan Panahova - a rural woman** in Azerbaijan benefitting from an EU funded project has been published on the global **European Year for Development** website:

<https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en/european-union/stories/azerbaijanchanginglivesofruralwomen>.

For further information: please contact Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation in the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan: Jeroen.willems@eeas.europa.eu

Azerbaijan: changing the lives of rural women

"Those two days of training were not wasted. They have changed my life. Now that I am better able to manage my money, I am finally able to manage my future as well!"

Turkan Panahova

Turkan Panahova's father left for Russia when she was only 8 years old. As the eldest child in the family,

suddenly a heavy burden was laid on her shoulders. Her young mother at the age of 25 was left homeless with three daughters. Turkan's uncle, an unskilled worker with 6 family members, provided shelter for them in his cellar.

When she was 15, Turkan lost any hope to get a higher education. Her main priority was to survive. To obtain a profession and make a living, she started to take lessons at a hairdresser. She had gifted hands, 3 years later she knew how to cut and the secrets of make-up and styling. Turkan decided to start her own business as a hairdresser, a big step for a woman in a rural area like Shamkir.

She applied to several banks for a loan. Unfortunately, her attempts were in vain, since she was jobless and without home. She had almost lost her hope, until a local bank

agreed to lend her some money. Finally, she could start her business and fulfil her dream. She had many clients and made a good profit. Nevertheless, she could not stop taking loans. The reason was simple. She was wasting money and could not save it for a rainy day. And rainy days did come. Her mother had high blood pressure and a heart disease while her youngest sister got an eye infection, which could cause loss of sight. *"My relatives were forcing me to get married. They thought I could end up as an old spinster. Finding a husband after your twenties is next to impossible in rural Azerbaijan, but how could I leave my mother and sister alone?"*

And at that very moment her local bank from which she borrowed frequently recommended Turkan to participate to EU-funded Financial Education training. At first, she was

suspicious about the training and did not want to waste her time. However, she decided to still give it a try. After two days of training, she learned about loans and received practical tips on how to manage her profit and save money.



Turkan saved money and built a beauty salon
Now she has well understood the importance of making more accurate calculations before deciding to take on a loan. She gradually saved money allowing her

to build a beauty salon in one of the rooms next to her uncle's house, where she works with her sister and 3 assistants. She is planning to build a separate house with three bedrooms as well. With the savings that she made, she can now afford the treatment of her dearest ones.

Today at the age of 22, she is a self-confident lady, who has her feet firmly on the ground.

To the question: "Could you benefit from the financial education training?" Turkan replied with a big smile on her young face: *"Oh yes! Those two days of training were not wasted. They have changed my life. Now that I am better able to manage my money, I am finally able to manage my future as well!"*

Fact box

About the EU-financed project

- EU funded project contributes to women professional development in rural areas in Azerbaijan to increase their employment opportunities and strengthen women capacities to enable them to manage the household finance and to start own business.
- The project is being implemented in a number of regions through Financial Education trainings to build capacity of local partners and final beneficiaries.
- Around 150 rural women participated in trainings like "Plan your future" and "Start & Improve your business".