



**EU DELEGATION NEWSLETTER**  
**OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2015**  
**EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS IN AZERBAIJAN**

**EDUCATION**

The **Financing Agreement of the "Support to Education in Azerbaijan" Program with a budget of 19 million EURO** was signed by the Government of Azerbaijan on 18 December. The action is designed in response to urgent needs in different educational sub-sectors. Through a combination of Technical Assistance, Twinning and civil society support, it will support i) improved learning opportunities and qualifications; ii) capacity development related to policymaking, strategic planning, coordination, management, development and delivery of education; iii) adherence of Azerbaijan to the European Higher Education Area; iv) policy and management of Research, Development and Innovation in higher education; v) improvement of Vocational Education Training policy in the context of a modern education system based on competences.

On 18 November a **new EU-funded Twinning project "Support to the Ministry of**



**Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Further Adherence of the Higher Education System to the European Higher Education Area" (Partners: Finland/Estonia, duration 24 months, budget 1.3 M Euro) was officially landed** at the Azerbaijan Technical University.

The project purpose is to increase the institutional capacities of the Ministry of Education and other key institutions of Azerbaijan for the development of Bologna related policies and the implementation of the

European Higher Education Area objectives and reference tools.

On 16th of December the Azerbaijan State University of Oil and Industry hosted a **National Erasmus+ Info Day** dedicated to the launch of the 2016 Erasmus+ Call for Proposals. The event was attended by over 100 representatives of higher education institutions, as well as representatives from Ministry of Education and EU Delegation to Azerbaijan. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency programme and National Erasmus+ Office in Azerbaijan provided presentations on a new call to participants and answered various questions.

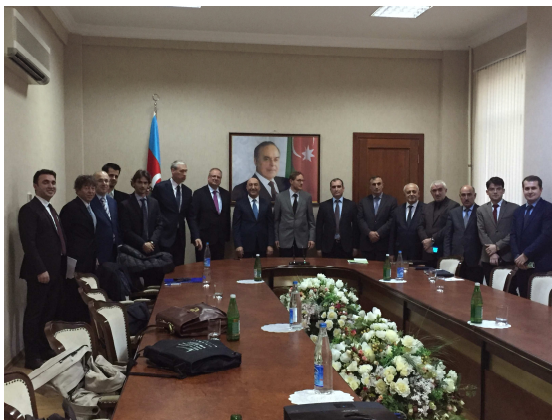


## AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



presentation and promotion of the "guloysha" high quality pomegranate. EU Delegation, project staff, representatives of partner organizations and the local community attended the opening ceremony.

The EU Head of Delegation (HOD) had a meeting with the **Minister of Agriculture** to discuss development in the agricultural sector and informed about potential areas of EU assistance. HOD briefed the Minister about the EU assistance in the establishment of e-agriculture, strengthening of food safety system, and increase of access of animal products to the market. The EU representative stated the EU readiness to provide expert support in many issues based on the needs of the Ministry.



On 11 November, the launch of a new EU-funded Technical Assistance project **"Support to E-Agriculture in Azerbaijan: innovative and effective agricultural policy management for higher productivity and competitiveness"** took place at the Ministry of Agriculture. The project objective is to enable fair and transparent distribution of agricultural subsidies, provide reliable data for use in policymaking and the assessment of policy impacts, and ultimately help to improve the quality of life in rural areas. It is envisaged that TA will last up until mid-2017.



On 25 November the EU Ambassador participated in the opening ceremony of the **first Farm House in Guba region**. It is a pilot project created to ensure efficiency in solving problems of farmers, to support and coordinate the activities of farmers in the Guba, Khachmaz, Siyazan and Shabran regions at all stages of the value chain – bringing products from the manufacturer to the consumers. The EU will help in Advisory Services, which encompass assistance to the MoA in designing, establishing, managing and further developing a regionally settled farm advisory system oriented at good agricultural practices.



**A three day workshop on "The role of agrarian services in the development of value chain"** started on 23 November



within the EU TAIEX program held for the Ministry of Agriculture to study the EU best practices in organisation and management of agrarian services, as well as for exchange of information and experience. The main objective was to learn the best EU practice to increase the efficiency of enterprises providing agrarian services, as well as to organise agrarian services in small

and medium farms and decrease their service tariffs.

An opening ceremony of the newly constructed **"Beauty salon"** of Gulay Gasimova, the successful completer of the hairdresser vocational course within the apprenticeship component of the EU funded **"Rural Sustainable Development Initiative"** program implemented by **"Umid"** Public Union was organized in Guneshli community of Shabran district on 3 December. An **exchange visit** was held for the farmers of target communities of the the same project to the Fruit storage chamber in Zardabi settlement of Guba district and the Farmhouse newly built under Guba Regional Centre for Agrarian Science, Information and Advisory on December 16 within. On December 22 an opening ceremony of the successfully completed **"Fruit-berry drying point construction"** project was organized within the project in Rustov community of Guba district.



## SOCIAL PROTECTION

On the dates of 12-16 October, TAIEX organised an **expert mission on Actuarial Modelling of Public Pensions Schemes**.

The Head of Social Protection Unit of Expertise France and the expert on Actuarial Calculations of Expertise France presented the main characteristics of the French pension actuarial projection models. A comparison review of France and Azerbaijani pension actuarial projection models, roundtable discussions on the main issues and results related to data analysis and actuarial models as well as appropriate methods that can be used in Azerbaijan allowed the staff of the Actuarial Calculation department of SSPF to identify the future steps in the development of actuarial pension models for Azerbaijan.



The Final Conference of the **Twinning Project “SSPF 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) was held on 28 October 2015. The project developed the legislation for the establishment of the funded

component of the pension system and for the development of non-state pension institutions. The legislative package includes two primary laws on the “Funded Part of Labour Pensions” and on the “Private Pension Funds” and the relevant blueprints for their implementation, accepted by the SSPF Board of Directors and to be used in the dialogue with other stakeholders. The experts drafted the Communication strategy to raise awareness on the pension reform and contributed to enhance the capacity of the relevant SSPF staff.



On 19 November project **"Support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population for the Development of a System for Medico-Social Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities"** (France/Germany, 24 months, total budget 1.1 million EUR) organized a seminar to present the strategy proposed by the project for the implementation of the new law concerning people with disability in Azerbaijan. This law – fully compliant with international standards (UN-CRPD) - was written by the project's experts in

2014. The law is important to set a long term strategy for its implementation. On 26 November, a meeting was held between the Minister and the Resident Twinning Advisor to present project's final recommendations. Several topics were discussed such as public awareness, implementation strategy of the new law, reform of the TSEKs (members and functioning), human resources (training, internal awareness, development of social work) and the spreading of two new tools developed by the project, together with Azerbaijani partners. Project team finally presented the results of a study developed on the basis of a sample of 650 real PWD cases, showing a number of characteristics and needs.



## JUSTICE

On **27 October** the EU Delegation has signed a **Twinning contract to strengthen the Commissioner for Human rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan**. The two-year project will be implemented by the Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the German Federal Foreign Office and the Polish Office of the Human Rights Defender. It will focus on strengthening of the capacity of the Ombudsman Institution to act as National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under OPCAT; strengthening of institutional capacity in core areas, including development of Management Information System (MIS); enhancement of the capacity to implement Law on Access to Information and general trainings for more efficient administration at central and regional levels. Total budget of the project is EUR 1,360,000.

With an overall **Programmic Cooperation Framework (PCF)** bilateral allocation for Azerbaijan of 4.7 MEURO, the PCF of the Council of Europe (CoE) is a potentially important instrument for support in the area of human rights, efficiency of the judiciary, anti-corruption and media freedom in Azerbaijan. With the first year of PCF implementation now well advanced, national consultations for the PCF's Annual Plan of Actions (APA) 2016 were held in Baku on **26 October** and **27 October**. The two-fold objective of the consultations this October were: i) to communicate the PCF to key stakeholders and the Azerbaijani public as a whole, and ii) to present and reach agreement on the main proposed actions of the PCF 2016 APA for Azerbaijan.





## CAPACITY BUILDING

GIZ in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan conducted within the EU co-funded project “**Support to civil service training capacities with a focus on EU affairs**” a number of trainings for future moderators of e-learning courses with two topics: “Anti-corruption/ ethics” and “Performance appraisal system in civil service” (12-13 October), for civil servants on “Time-management and Delegation” (14-15 October), “Team-building and Motivation” (22-23 October), “Leadership skills” (4-6 November), “Strategic leadership programme for senior civil servants” (10-12 November), two training courses “Training of Trainers (ToT)/Adult Learning” (18-20 November and 23-25 November), “Negotiations & Conflict Management/Mediation” (26-27 November), two half-day trainings on the two topics: “Self-Management and Personal Effectiveness”, “Teamwork and Motivation Skills” (2 and 3 December) as well as two trainings in Mingencevir city on “Leadership skills” (14-15 December) and on “Negotiations & Conflict Management/Mediation” (17-18 December).



Following a request from the Ministry of Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, between **5 and 9 October**, TAIEX organised an expert mission on Reviewing the Existing Telecommunications Legislation. Aim of the mission was to provide advice on the level of compliance of the national legislation with the relevant EU legislation as well as to provide guidance on the necessary changes needed to ensure compliance with the EU Legislation and the requirements of the

**World Trade Organisation** General Agreement on Trade in Services. Within this framework, TAIEX experts promoted the European legislation on Electronic Communications with special focus on broadband facilitation legislation as well as the number of other EU Directives.



On 6-9 October the Programme Administration Office together with SIBA project organized four-day training for line ministries and other public bodies with the aim to support them in preparing twinning synopses, provide for them more information about EU institutional building instruments (TW, TAIEX and SIGMA), inform them about successful TW projects implemented in Azerbaijan. 40

representatives from 25 different Azerbaijani Public Administrations took part in the training.

The project "Support to the Central Elections Commission (CEC) in production of video clips on Candidate Registration and Election day procedures" has been implemented in close cooperation with the CEC. The main objective of the project was to support the CEC in improvement of the quality of electoral processes and electoral administration in line with European standards. As a result clips on candidate registration and Election day have been produced and widely distributed via social media and the CEC web-site. The video clips could be easily used as education material for representatives of Constituency and Precinct Election Commissions in future elections.



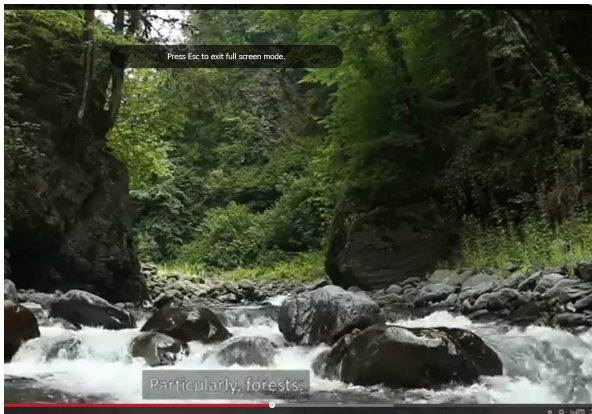
[http://msk.gov.az/az/video\\_gallery/media\\_details/10](http://msk.gov.az/az/video_gallery/media_details/10)



To strengthen networking competences of women in the civil service a round table on "Women careers in civil service" was held **19 October** within the framework of the EU-funded project "Support to civil service training capacities with a focus on EU affairs". The event was organized by the project partners GIZ and the Civil Service Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



The EU funded **Twinning project “Support for the Development of a Modern System of Standardization and Technical Regulation in Azerbaijan”** (UK, budget € 1,2 mln, 24 months) held the workshops for the staff of the State Committee for Standardization, Metrology and Patent (SCSMP) on **23 October** on the process of adoption and application of European and International Standards and **27 November** on the implications of EU based Technical Regulation for Market Surveillance Authorities. A delegation from the SCSMP participated in a study visit to Ljubljana, Brussels and Paris during **October 2015**. The visit had an intensive agenda, including visits to the European Commission (DG Grow), the Slovenian Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, and SQUALPI the French Regulatory Body for Standardization and Technical Regulation to discuss the EU legal and operational framework for Technical Regulation and Standardization.



A short video has been prepared to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem of Azerbaijan forests within the EU funded **“European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II Program”**.

Join us to save our forests:  
<http://www.enpi-fleg.org/join/>

ADA University and Centre of Excellence in EU Studies organized a training on Cultural and Science Diplomacy in the European Union and the Challenges of European Union Neighbourhood Policy on **3-5 November 2015** for Azerbaijani civil servants within the EU funded **"Support to Civil Service EU trainings and Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in EU Matters in Azerbaijan"** project. This training is a continuation of a comprehensive capacity building training program for civil servants in EU Affairs.





On 9-11 November 5 delegates from the Azerbaijani Chamber of Accounts visited the Slovene Court of Audit. The visit took place with EU funded project **“Support to the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan in preparation for a future twinning project”**. The purpose was to brief about the Slovene Court of Audit’s approach to the introduction and development of performance audit within its institution. The delegation was informed how the Slovene Court planned, executed and reported on its performance audit work

through a combination of presentations, discussions and actual case studies.

On the dates of 18-20 November a delegation from the State Customs Committee had a study tour in Italy on customs transit procedure within **EU funded TAIEX program**. The objective was to gain practical and theoretical knowledge in border management cooperation on common transit issue as well as relevant EU aquies, introduction to EU legislation regulating transit, Common Transit Convention: responsibilities, functioning, benefits, procedures for transit formalities: declaring, customs control, use of IT systems for transit facilitation, etc., management and best practices of transit operations.



The Centre of Excellence in EU Studies at ADA University within the EU funded project "Support to Civil Service EU trainings and Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in EU Matters in Azerbaijan" organized a **study visit for Azerbaijani civil servants to Estonia** on 7-10 December. The study visit covered such issues as a general overview of Estonian experience being EU member since 2004; general overview of the Estonia’s e-Solutions, visit to the e-Showroom, overview of the changes in Estonia’s

macroeconomics during the last 25 years, changes in Estonian educational landscape, familiarization with the EU studies programs, overview of Estonia’s cyber security developments, changes in the Estonian society during the last 25 years.

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The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan hosted international seminar on performance audit on December 14-22, 2015 within the expected **Twinning project of European Neighborhood and Partnership Policy Programme**. The discussions of the seminar

focused on consideration of local and international guidelines based on appropriate practices in Azerbaijan and UK. Following the information on best practices by international expert on preparation of performance audit plan, audit subject selection, conducting field works, report preparation, relations with Parliament the exchange of views were made on gained experience with the efforts of relevant departments of the Chamber. Also during the discussions several performance audit reports were thoroughly analyzed to benefit UK actual practice.

The **“Support to the State Agency on Control over Safety in Construction of Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Azerbaijan –SACS- in the field of transition to the EU construction standards”** project ended on 30 December 2015. The project lasted 19 month and (1) drafted a Road Map and Action Plan for transition of existing



construction standards to the EU standards, (2) strengthened the capacity of the SACSC Personnel to be able to proceed the transition process after the finishing of the project and (3) drafted three draft national standards on construction.

## OTHERS

### EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL



On 29 October the 6th **European Film Festival** was jointly organised by the EU Delegation, EU Embassies accredited in Azerbaijan and Park Cinema. The Festival was held from 29 October until 6 November through the Park Cinema network. Tickets for all films were free of charge. The screening of the Belgium film "Turquaze" was followed by an official reception. The Festival had a record number of participating countries – 18, plus Azerbaijan.

The EU Delegation participated at the **International Students Festivals** held at the **Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy** (20 November) and the **State Oil and Industry University** (19 December) along with approximately 35 embassies accredited in Azerbaijan and international students representing their countries. Festivals were true celebration of cultures and traditions. With the aim to familiarise guests with different cultures and create an intercultural dialogue, the stands and country booths with brochures, magazines, catalogs as well as national cuisine patterns reflecting country-specific information were presented to attendees. Both Festivals continued with concert programs.



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