



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: COMMISSIONER POTOČNIK CALLS TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLANET

On 5 June, on the eve of World Environment Day, the European Commissioner for Environment Janez Potočnik issued a statement as follows:

“World Environment Day is an important day in the calendar. Our world needs it. By continuing to make the choices we make, by consuming and producing in the way that we have been doing for too long, we run the risk of changing the world irreversibly. We run the risk that future generations will not enjoy the planet in the same way that we have been lucky enough to do.

We need something to draw people’s attention to the problems that are happening around us every single day, as we go about our normal lives and to the possible solutions to those problems. We need every day to be World Environment Day. We need every day to be a day for Biodiversity.

We need to remind ourselves over and over just how much we have to lose if we take the environment for granted. I don’t just mean the risk of polluting our air, soil and water but also the economic damage we can do by destroying crucial ecosystems. These are the same ecosystems which regulate climate change, treat our waste, purify our air and water and prevent floods and droughts. The ecosystems which provide habitats, cultural services, recreation and, let us not forget: jobs and growth.

In Europe we will continue to work towards halting biodiversity loss, towards improving our efficient use of resources and enforcing our legislation. Our vision is to make sure that biodiversity and its services are protected, valued and restored. We want people to know that they are essential contributors to human wellbeing and economic prosperity. We also know how important it is for us to go further than our European environment policies – we will need to work across sectors, regions, countries and continents on this, the most global of global challenges. But this is not a job just for EU Institutions or governments. It is everyone’s responsibility, including industry and consumers. We all share responsibility for the planet we live on and we need to act together.

I invite you to look at our biodiversity website and to take part in our awareness raising campaign:

<http://www.weareallinthisogether.eu/>

We are all connected. We are all in this together”.



EU-FUNDED PROJECT LAUNCHES A NEW GREENWAY ON THE EVE OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

On 5 June the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project “Sustainable Development at Local Level” held in Gonchary village (Volozhin district, Minsk region) a workshop on the eve of World Environment Day entitled “Assessing potential of natural sites for development of agro-rural tourism”. The objective of the event was the development of a greenway in Volozhin district, increase awareness on environment issues and importance of partnerships on local level for safe and prosperous future.

During the workshop the participants (agro-farmsteads owners), assisted by project experts, developed a logo and the name for Volozhin greenway. It was called “Volozhin goodies” after the main trade route of the region. The developed logo will be placed during the greenway, as well as on souvenir and other products. After the workshop, the participants placed a poster with greenway logo on a board, installed at the starting point of the new greenway. It is expected the event to enhance the development and integration of disparate local sites in a single large greenway.

Contact person: Viachaslav Smirnov, e-mail: viachaslau.smirnou@un.minsk.by



EU-FUNDED PROJECT HELD AN EVENT ON WORLD BIODIVERSITY DAY

On 21 May the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project “Building capacity for Strategic Environmental Assessment and environmental conventions implementation in Belarus” organised in the Berezinsky Biosphere Nature Reserve (Domzheritsy village, Lepel district) an event dedicated to World Biodiversity Day (22 May 2010). The action included joint activities with the local schoolchildren on building nestling boxes and demonstrated practical implementation of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy, developed within the project.

During the event, schoolchildren of the Domzheritsy school, together with the project experts, representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, local authorities and Berezinsky Biosphere Nature Reserve built 40 nestling boxes for titmice and 10 for bats, held a competition on the best slogan for biodiversity conservation and the best decoration of nestling box for titmice and bats. An independent jury consisted of journalists identified the best nestling box with the slogan “They will Survive – Survive and We”. The winner schoolchildren received prizes from the project and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

Contact person: Viachaslav Smirnov, e-mail: viachaslau.smirnou@un.minsk.by





EU-FUNDED PROJECT HOLDS A SUMMER SCHOOL ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

On 31 May-4 June the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Capacity Building in Strategic Environmental Assessment and the implementation of environmental conventions Republic of Belarus" held in Berezinsky Biosphere Nature Reserve (Domzheritsy village, Lepel district) a summer school for public participation in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. More than 40 participants from NGOs, universities and central public authorities took part in the event.

SEA is an internationally recognised tool for joint analysis and assessment of environmental issues, used in the implementation of the proposed programmes, plans and policy initiatives. By means of the SEA environmental and even social impacts of programmes implementation can be predicted. SEA is widely used in territorial and sectoral planning, in land use planning. The summer school participants learned about SEA, and acquired practical skills on methodology on SEA application in Belarus. After the summer school all participants received appropriate certificates of passing mentioned courses.

Contact person: Igor Tchoulba, e-mail: igar.tchoulba@undp.org



EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

EU-FUNDED PROJECT TESTS NEW TOURIST ROUTE ACROSS DVINA RIVER

On 25-30 May the EU-funded project "Bella Dvina - Crossing the Border, Discovering the Culture, Enjoying the Nature of the Western Dvina/Daugava River Space" organised a cross-border canoe and kayak promotional tour across the Western Dvina. The event aimed to attract attention of tourists from Belarus and its close neighbours to water routes in the cross-border tourist region Bella Dvina which includes Vitebsk region and Latgale (Latvia). Overall length of the promo route was about 150 km. Project experts from Belarus and Latvia, representatives of local authorities, tourist agencies and media representatives took part in the tour.

On 25 May the team started from Polotsk, passing the Disna city, and arriving on the third day to the Yustyanovo village, where Latvian members of the tour joined Belarusian participants. Tour team crossed the border and custom control between Belarus and Latvia in the point of simplified border control "Druja". On the next day the participants visited Kraslava, ending the promotional tour on 30 May in Slutiški village. The part of the route from Verhnedvinsk to Slutiški belongs to the new cross-border water route "From the Labyrinth of Lakes to the beautiful Dvina" which has been developed this year within the Bella Dvina project. The route has been planned so as to give water tourists a chance not only to enjoy the beauties of the river, but also to see certain places of interest in the Vitebsk region and Latgale.

More information at: <http://belladvina.com/>

Contact person: Marina Borisova, e-mail: mborisova@d-w-h.org



EU-FUNDED PROJECT PUBLISHES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOURNALISTS ON COVERING THE ISSUE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On 31 May the EU-funded and UNDP-UNICEF implemented project "Preventing, Fighting and Addressing the Social Consequences of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Belarus" published the recommendations for journalists on covering the issue of human trafficking and related crimes. The document was developed by the journalists of the national and regional mass media and students of the Institute of Journalism of the Belarusian State University with participation of international experts from Ukraine during the training "Covering the Issue of Human Trafficking in the Media" organised in the framework of the project.

Standards of covering trafficking in human beings in the media adopted by the leading broadcasting corporations of the United Kingdom, France and the USA and professional journalists' associations in Ukraine, Russia, Armenia, and Moldova were taken as a basis for the elaboration of the recommendations. The recommendations include general norms and rules of covering the issue of human trafficking, conducting interviews with victims of trafficking and their relatives, and organising and conducting journalistic investigation when covering this topic.

More information at: <http://www.trafik.by/>

Contact person: Alexander Novikov, e-mail: alexander.novikov@undp.by





EU-FUNDED PROJECT PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN FROM THE CHERNOBYL-AFFECTED DISTRICT

On 1 June the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Combat the Negative Effects of the Chernobyl Disaster in Belarus" held in the kindergarten/secondary school in Veliky Bor (Khoyniki district, Gomel region) the first children handicrafts fair. All handmade articles were made by local pupils during extra activity classes: bead craft, dressmaking courses, embroidery, as well as technical creativity, pyrography, opened in the school as result of successful implementation of local initiative.

Young craftsmen held master classes for guests, shared their skills and ideas about the creation of new handicrafts and embroidery. Local pupils had an opportunity to sell their best works, and guests, representatives of the school and inhabitants of Veliky Bor village could buy memorable gifts and souvenirs.

It was the first experience of business initiative among local children, which is indispensable for development of activity of rural youth. Signing memorandum of agreement between school and representatives of the Centre of Business Support (Khoyniki town) became one of the most successful achievements for both parties. In this memorandum parties agreed to cooperate and help pupils to sell handmade crafts. This festival event ended by the concert dedicated to the International Children's Day.

Contact person: Elena Sedach, e-mail: alena.sedach@undp.by



STUDENTS FROM BELARUS, UKRAINE, AND MOLDOVA MEET FOR ERASMUS MUNDUS PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

On 7-8 June the EU Delegation to Ukraine and Belarus held in Kyiv the first joint Erasmus Mundus pre-departure orientation (PDO) for students from Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. This event was performed following the initiative of the EMA CIS & Mongolia Regional Chapter of Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, in close cooperation with the EU Delegation. Last year three separate PDOs were held in July in Kyiv (Ukraine), Chisinau (Moldova) and Moscow (Russia).

This year more than 30 students and alumni were present at the meeting and had an opportunity to interact and communicate. These students have won scholarships grants, funded by the European Commission, to study at one of the Erasmus Mundus courses at universities of the EU Member States. The event was an opportunity for them to meet the staff of the EU Delegation as well as to get a first-hand advice from Erasmus Mundus alumni.



Contact person: Anna Butenko, e-mail: butenko_anna@yahoo.com

BELARUS ENDORSE SECRETARIAT FOR NORTHERN DIMENSION TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

On 8 June in the framework of the TEN-T Days conference in Zaragoza, Spain, seven out of the eleven partner countries of the Northern Dimension Partnership for Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) signed a formal agreement to set up a Secretariat to help fund transport projects. The remaining four, including Belarus, adopted a declaration of intent pledging to join in the coming months once the appropriate internal proceedings are concluded.

Vice-President of the European Commission Siim Kallas, responsible for transport, said: "This is an important milestone in the strengthening of the transport market in an area at the crossroads of West and East, North and South. I am glad to see the willingness of the EU and non-EU partners to plan tomorrow's transport system in a regional perspective, rather than in a national one." The European Commission helped reach the agreement to allow the secretariat to be in place already from 1 January 2011. The Secretariat will be hosted by the Helsinki-based Nordic Investment Bank (NIB), which will share its know-how in financing projects with the partners.



Contact person: Helen Kearns, e-mail: helen.kearns@ec.europa.eu



EU-FUNDED PROJECT HOLDS TRAINING ON CHILD PROTECTION IN BELARUS

On 8-9 June the EU-funded project "State and Civil Society Partnership in Belarus for Improved Child Protection" conducted in Minsk training on best international practices in the area, including on the right of children to influence policies and practices that affect their lives. The event involved 40 practitioners from different regions of Belarus, including local commissioners on children's rights, directors of child social centres, juvenile police officers, social workers.

The participants discussed international experience of child protection systems to improve the quality of rendered assistance to children – victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and looked at the ways to introduce the learnt lessons in Belarus.

Launched in March this year, the EU-funded project is working to build capacity of non-state actors and state authorities in Belarus to strengthen protective environment for children and to facilitate a mechanism for inter-agency and multi-sectoral cooperation to prevent and combat child abuse in all its forms.

Contact person: Serhiy Polianski, e-mail: serhiy.polianski@britishcouncil.org.ua



EU-FUNDED PROJECT SUMS UP RESULTS OF PROJECT IDEAS CONTEST

On 9 June the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Combat the Negative Effects of Chernobyl Disaster in Belarus" closed the Project Ideas Contest and summed up the final results. Thirty five organisations from target districts (Vetka, Zhitkovichy, Khoyniki and Buda-Koshelevo) of Gomel region were recognised as winners of this Contest. The total funding for these projects exceeds €400,000.

The most deserving attention, interesting and economically viable project initiatives have been selected out of 80 project ideas by a commission made up of representatives of the EU Delegation, UNDP, and the Ministry of Emergencies, as well as Regional and Districts authorities.

All approved projects target enhancement of socio-economic environment in project's districts, development of creative potential among children and healthy life style, as well as educational training about safe living in Chernobyl-affected areas.

The project experts conducted training for organisations-winners in early June. Many of training participants were "new comers" in this sphere and it is their first experience in project implementation that's why this practice is evidently in need. In the nearest future project staff plans to hold a series of trainings on the issues of small and medium enterprises as well as fundraising.

Contact person: Elena Sedach, e-mail: alena.sedach@undp.by



EUROPEAN COMMISSION HOLDS INFORMATION MEETING ON NON -STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR BELARUS

On 10 June in Minsk the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus held an information meeting about the ongoing call for proposals "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development: In-country Operations in Belarus" (reference number: EuropeAid/130100/L/ACT/BY). This call was published on 18 May with a deadline for submission of concept notes set for 5 July 2010.

The meeting took place in Hotel Viktoria for some 100 representatives of Belarusian and EU non-state actors, local government and media. The purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities programme, priorities and objectives of the ongoing call for proposals, and to provide answers to various questions on the application and post-application process. In his opening remarks, Mr Jean-Eric Holzapfel, Chargé d'affaires, EU Delegation to Belarus, noted the importance of supporting non-state actors and local authorities in order to work for better governance and more participative development which has a direct effect on communities and individual citizens. The information meeting also included an overview by the National Coordination Unit for EU Assistance of the project registration process followed a detailed presentation of the call for proposals and questions and answers. At the end of the meeting, the participants had an opportunity to learn about ongoing and future activities of two NSA-LA projects awarded as a result of 2008 and 2009 calls for proposals. More information about this all for proposals, including an unofficial Russian translation of the Guidelines for Applicants, is available at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> (search by reference; reference number 130100).

Contact person: Stanislav Topolnytskyy, e-mail: stanislav.topolnytskyy@ec.europa.eu





TEN NEW BALTIC SEA COOPERATION PROJECTS SELECTED

On 10 June high level representatives of eleven countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, including Belarus, decided about new transnational cooperation projects in Helsinki, Finland. €27 million from the European Union's Baltic Sea Region programme were committed to the ten best cooperation projects in the fields of transport and environment. 167 organisations from the area will be involved in joint actions.

61 project applications had been submitted to the Baltic Sea Region Programme's joint Secretariat in Rostock and Riga by the end of March. The project ideas have to demonstrate their potential to contribute to the development of the whole region. The Programme's Monitoring Committee including national and regional representatives from all participating countries selects the best project proposals. The EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 promotes regional development through transnational cooperation. The Programme provides funding to projects fostering innovations, improving accessibility, managing environmental resources and strengthening cities and regions in countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. The total Programme funding is €236 million.



More information at: <http://eu.baltic.net/>
Contact person: Alke Voß, e-mail: alke.voss@eu.baltic.net

EU-FUNDED PROJECT OPENS INFOCENTRES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ECOTOURISM

On 11-12 June the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Sustainable Development at Local Level" officially opened in Novopolotsk city and Zaborje village (Rasny district, Vitebsk region) two Information Centres for Sustainable Development and Ecotourism.

The activities of both Centres include research, information and training seminars and workshops, rendering of library services for sustainable development. The Centres will facilitate the exchange of experiences with partners from Belarus and neighbouring countries, and will support the Belarusian regions in the development of Local Agendas 21 and Greenways. Opening of the Centre in Novopolotsk was accompanied by a demonstration of local initiatives on sustainable development, supported by the project. One also could see the presentation of local craftsmen works and Children's Fashion Show – so called "environmental collections", as well as performances of children's environmental theatre "Ant hill". In Zaborje village opening of the Centre coincided with the national festival of rural tourism "Zaborski fest". It is expected that by the end of the year three more centres will be opened in Belarus with the assistance of the EU-funded project in Chavusy, Belooziorsk and Zhaludok.



More information at: <http://www.ecorazvitie.by/>
Contact person: Viachaslav Smirnov, e-mail: viachaslau.smirnou@un.minsk.by

EU-FUNDED PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

8-9 JULY, MINSK

Visit of the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle to Belarus

More information at: <http://www.delblr.ec.europa.eu/>
Contact person: Ramunas Janusauskas, e-mail: ramunas.janusauskas@ec.europa.eu, tel.: (017) 328 66 13

8-9 JULY, MINSK

Final conference of the EU-funded project "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" on Multi-stakeholder Local Action – Improvement of local sustainable strategies and local actions development and implementation in three rural communities in Belarus

Contact person: Elena Chernorutskaya, e-mail: helencher@gmail.com, tel.: (017) 263 54 17

8-9 JULY, POLOTSK

Final conference of the EU-funded project "Bella Dvina - Crossing the Border, Discovering the Culture, Enjoying the Nature of the Western Dvina/Daugava River Space" and official inauguration of the Polotsk Tourist Information Centre

More information at: <http://belladvina.com/>
Contact person: Marina Borisova, e-mail: mborisova@d-w-h.org, tel.: (029) 873 35 82