



EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

CITY STAKEHOLDERS FROM BELARUS AND MOROCCO LEARN HOW EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES CUT THEIR ENERGY BILLS

On 14–18 March 2011, the EU-funded CIUDAD project SURE: Sustainable Urban Energy in the ENPI region – towards the Covenant of Mayors gathered city officials, engineers, technicians and NGO representatives from Belarus, Morocco, Spain, Germany and France for a training on Sustainable Energy Action Plans in Murcia, Spain.

In the course of the 3-day training in Murcia, city officials and stakeholders from Polotsk and Salé had an opportunity to see what measures help the city of Murcia to cut energy consumption and reduce energy bills. Study visits to the PV plant and wind energy farm, introduction to LED street lighting and biogas production at the Murcia solid waste plant, overview of the city mobility plan and energy awareness raising programmes made experts from Belarus and Morocco think about what needs to be done in their cities in order to make them more energy efficient.



Stakeholders from Polotsk and Salé will soon have an opportunity to introduce the experience they have gained in Murcia in their own cities.

By the end of 2011, Polotsk and Salé will have adopted their own Sustainable Energy Action Plans, which will be followed by Local Energy Days and energy efficiency pilot actions.

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EU-FUNDED EAST INVEST INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

East Invest programme, the new regional tool for the economic development of the Eastern Partnership region, was launched on March 31st 2011 by the 85 partners of this EU-funded project during a conference in Brussels.

The Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, Stefan Füle described this programme as “one of several concrete programs that will accompany and support the Eastern Partnership Countries on the road of economic transformation towards economic integration with the EU”.

A € 8.75 million project, East-Invest is a new regional investment and trade facilitation initiative for the economic development focusing on support to small and medium size enterprises from the Eastern Partnership region.

The main beneficiaries of the initiatives are the Eastern Partnership countries, namely Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The main objectives of East-Invest are to develop business networking and multiply exchanges between public and private organisations from the European Union and Eastern Partnership region through:

- Encouraging public-private dialogue and promoting consultation of private sector in decision making;
- Facilitating exchange of best-practices and supporting creation of partnerships between EU and Eastern Partnership companies;
- Developing the capacity of Eastern Partnership SME support organisations.

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EU PROJECTS INFORMATION DAY ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY HELD IN MINSK

On 15th April 2011, the EU Delegation to Belarus organised a conference aimed to present EU projects in energy efficiency sector. The conference "Energy efficiency: European experience, cooperation and prospective for Belarus" held during the European Union Sustainable Energy Week, for the search of associates and new partners in Belarus.

The event gathered energy efficiency advocates in and out of government, representatives of the Belarusian non-state sector focusing on energy issues, representatives of the academic and expert community, journalists as well as lawyers and officials responsible for the country's energy sector.

Elena Rakova, Coordinator for Environment and Energy Projects of the EU Delegation to Belarus, said in her presentation that by 2030 the demand for energy will increase by 20-40%. As a result, all the countries will be making efforts to decrease their dependence on hydrocarbon raw materials. This process will inevitably bring Belarus and EU for cooperation in energy sector.

During the conference, a number of ongoing projects in the energy sector were presented, such as the international regional programme "INNOGATE", project "SURE: Sustainable Urban Energy in the ENPI region – towards the Covenant of Mayors", project "Support in realization of complex energy policy for Belarus" and the project on renewal of bog territories, developed by the experts of the International Sakharov Environmental University.

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KEMA GROUP WILL CONSULT BELARUS ON LEGISLATION IN ENERGY SECTOR

Belarus will involve the European experts for elaboration of the law on power industry, which is likely to be submitted to the parliament by the end of the year. Ilka Lewington, representative of "Kema International B.V (Netherlands), team leader of the EU-funded project "Support in realization of complex energy policy for Belarus" made mentioned statement at the conference "Energy efficiency: European experience, cooperation and prospective for Belarus".

The Dutch company "Kema International B.V." has won the tender and will be implementing the EU funded project in Belarus from 2011–2012. The overall project budget amounts to € 5 mln.

The project beneficiaries are Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Nature, Department of energy efficiency of State Standard, the National Academy of Science and other local authorities in the pilot cities.

"This project aims to help with implementation of the Energy Development Strategy in Belarus, and has been approved by the Government in August 2010. We will provide with technical assistance in law and normative acts development, including the draft of the law on power industry, which is likely to be submitted by the end of 2011", said Ilka Lewington in her presentation.

The project will also focus on other areas, such as advisory services for Belarus on energy efficiency and implementation of the pilot projects. The later will include implementation of the energy efficiency technologies in Iyevsk boarding-school and building of biogas setting at one of the agricultural enterprises. Financing of the pilot projects makes up € 2,8 mln.

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POLOTSK COULD JOIN THE EUROPEAN COVENANT OF MAYORS IN 2011

At the conference "Energy efficiency: European experience, cooperation and prospective for Belarus" Ivan Shchadranok, the Director of "Interaction" admitted that Polotsk is the first one of Belarusian cities could join to the European Covenant of Mayors in 2011. There was a presentation of "SURE: Sustainable Urban Energy in the ENPI region – towards the Covenant of Mayors". The project is being implemented since 2010 for duration of 30 months. The project budget is € 620 thousand. The lead partner will be Freidrichshafen (Germany), twin-city of Polotsk.

It is planned to allocate € 250–300 thousand for project financing in Polotsk, at the same time Polotsk will provide only € 20 thousand from the city budget. The project aimed to develop the cooperation between Eastern and Southern regions of ENPI and to promote sustainable energy development of two cities (Polotsk and Sale) by joining the Covenant of Mayors- popular European initiative. This initiative implies the obligations on EU strategy "20-20-20" implementation. The strategy purpose is to reach significant improvements in sustainable energy development by 2020: to reduce CO² emissions by 20%, to raise the share of renewable energy sources up to 20%, and to increase energy efficiency by 20%.

After the Sustainable Energy Action is developed, one pilot activity will be financed from the project budget. There will be introduction of energy saving lamps at E.Polotckaya Street in Polotsk. The budget of this activity is € 40–50 thousand.

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ROUND TABLE ON CHILD PROTECTION HELD IN BREST

On 14th April 2011, the EU-funded project "State and Civil Society Partnership in Belarus for Improved Child Protection" conducted regional table on multi-sectoral approach to preventing and combating child abuse.

Child abuse cannot be effectively addressed by one department or a professional, but by coherent efforts of multiple stakeholders. Recognising this, the project concentrates on fostering cooperation between state authorities and civil society to strengthen multi-sectoral approach to child protection in Belarus.

The round table in Brest looked at the ways to enhance links between public bodies and NGOs to improve well-being and protection of children. It involved over 30 participants, including commissioners on underage persons, social workers, juvenile police officers, managers of child shelters, and representatives of 10 NGOs. This unique opportunity provided a platform to find joint solutions for effective child rights protection addressing gaps in the current system.

The round table results will be reflected in Policy and Implementation Guidelines for Multi-Agency Collaboration to be developed for the roll-out nationwide.

This EU-funded project is managed by the British Council in partnership with INGO "Ponimanie" based in Minsk.

More information at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/ukraine-projects-belarus-child-protection.htm>

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NEW PROJECT ON WET PEATLAND MANAGEMENT TO BE LAUNCHED IN BELARUS

A new EU-funded project aimed at implementing new concepts for wet peatland management will soon be launched in Belarus.

The project will run for 2,5 year with the total budget of €1,686 mln. It will be supported by the State Committee for science and technologies of Belarus.

Speaking at the confence "Energy efficiency: European experience, cooperation and prospective for Belarus", professor Oleg Rod`kin Vice-chancellor of the International Sakharov Environmental University, noticed, that in case of flood of 125 thousand hectares of wet peatland, there will be an opportunity to get about one million tons of conditional fuel annually.

The project implementation will allow to introduce environmentally friendly production technology of renewable bio-fuel from the territory of wet peatlands in Belarus. This will result in to the reduction of carbon offset, sustainable development of the territory and creation of working places. To increase the project effectiveness, the project implementers are planning to learn from their European counterparts.

The project will last for three years. During this time, 100 hectares of peatland will be flooded which will allow to get from 500 to 1000 tons of conditional fuel annually.

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