



EU-BELARUS ENVIRONMENTAL CO-OPERATION

The European Union is currently spending €1.5 million on a major project entitled "Support to environment and sustainable development in Belarus". Belarus shows a growing interest in creating sustainable development strategies and in promoting environmental protection mechanisms, but the capacity for progress is currently insufficient. This project will strengthen local partnerships between the Government, civil society and the private sector to work towards improved sustainable development.

The project's duration is 27 months and its budget amounts to €1,670,000 including a contribution of €170,000 from UNDP, which also implements the project. One of the major goals is to facilitate improvements in public services and the local economy through support of community-led sustainable development actions, including those related to the establishment of a Belarusian Greenways network.

The EU is also planning to increase funding to Belarus in the environment sector by a further €5 million. The "Support to the development of a comprehensive framework for international environmental co-operation in the Republic of Belarus" programme will have three components. The first component will address legal and procedural convergence, as well as capacity building for implementation. The second component will cover a number of pilot projects in the area of municipal waste management in medium-sized cities. The third component will concentrate on education, awareness-raising and dissemination activities and will promote better awareness of environmental issues, both theoretical and practical, among the population, especially students.

Other environmental projects ongoing in Belarus include the regional technical assistance project "Support to Kyoto Protocol Implementation" (SKPI). This project aims to involve more deeply the energy and the industry sectors in effective green house gas reduction measures, using the Joint Implementation and the Clean Development Mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. The project will make a presentation at the Belarusian State University on 5 May (see upcoming events below).



EU PROJECT FACILITATES IMPROVEMENT OF LEGISLATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On 9 April the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Support to environment and sustainable development in Belarus" held in Gomel a roundtable "Improvement of the Belarusian legislation on sustainable development: the Gomel Region". The event was part of the International Conference "Legal support on sustainable development of the Republic of Belarus" and brought together legal researchers from the Belarusian State University, specialists on sustainable development from the Gomel Region and representatives of the mass media.

The roundtable aimed at discussion the integration of sustainable development principles in the Belarusian legislation, as well as the legal frameworks for development and implementation of local strategies for sustainable development (Local Agenda 21) on the example of Gomel Region. This event was the second organised public discussion on proposals development for improvement of legal frameworks in the sustainable development area.

According to the legal researcher Tamara Makarova, "the participation in discussions of specialists from different legal research areas allows to discuss in details the issue and develop useful and 'deliberated' recommendations".

The discussion results in the form of conceptual and concrete proposals and recommendations on changes and updating of ongoing Belarusian legislation will be studied by project experts, and proposed to the public lawmaking authorities.



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

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EU PROJECT INCREASES PUBLIC AWARENESS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

On 22 April the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Support to environment and sustainable development in Belarus" held in Minsk Region an event on the occasion of the International Earth Day. The event was organised in co-operation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the Ecological secondary school of the Valevachi Village, Chervyen Rayon. The Chargé d'affaires of the EU Delegation Jean-Eric Holzapfel took part in the event.

During the event at Volma fish farm in the Ozerniy Village, Chervyen Raion, the pupils, representatives of the EU Delegation and UNDP organised environmental games and contests, as well as a tour with observation of birds and animals behaviour. The event aimed to increase public awareness on separate waste collection and monitoring of environmental situation.

The "Volma" fish farm has a special interest for nature conservation, preservation and sustainable use of biological diversity due to habitation of black storks and other rare species of animals listed in the Red Book.

The event should attract public attention and media to the respect for the environment, creating an effective system to preserve rare and endangered species. This approach is enshrined in the new National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in the Republic of Belarus, drafted by the project experts.

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

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

EU PROJECT HOLDS IN MOZYR LARGE-SCALE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

On 29 March-2 April the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Combat the Negative Effects of the Chernobyl Disaster in Belarus" held in Mozyr Town, Gomel Region two large-scale medical examinations (screening) of adults and children. The screening was conducted on the basis of the Mozyr Central Clinic with the assistance of the Ministry of Health and the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education within the project component "Establishment of International Scientific and Practical Centre of Thyroid Disease".

Throughout the week, doctors and laboratory assistants of the International Fund "Arnika" have examined over 600 people, including 150 children. Preliminary results of the medical screening show that people living in the contaminated areas are in need of regular routine medical checks by qualified specialists and they require constant monitoring by medical specialists.

"This is the first medical screening conducted within the framework of the EU/UNDP project. The new data obtained in the course of the mass medical examination will serve as a fundamental scientific platform for the International Centre, scheduled to open in late 2010", - said project manager Andrei Pinigin.

The analysis of the screening data is still under way, but their preliminary assessment shows that cases of thyroid diseases were identified among young people who had not had thyroid treatment on their medical records before. Even the preliminary results of the screening serve as a solid justification of the necessity to provide the general public in the Chernobyl-affected regions with information materials and education with special emphasis made on the crucial importance of people's active involvement in the dynamic monitoring of their own health.

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EU PROJECT HOLDS A STUDY TOUR ON FIGHTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

On 5-9 April 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" held a study tour to London, UK for representatives of Belarusian counter-trafficking state agencies and NGOs. The programme of the visit included meetings with members of the Parliamentary Group on Trafficking of Women and Children, officers of the Directorate of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of London Metropolitan Police, and representatives of the largest British NGOs which provide social and rehabilitation assistance to victims of trafficking.



The Belarusian specialists learned about the system of counter-trafficking activities in the UK, the particularities of the national legislation on preventing and fighting human trafficking, state-funded programmes of rendering services to victims of trafficking, modern approaches to preventing sexual exploitation of children, and the operation of the national network of rehabilitation shelters for victims of trafficking.

An important outcome of the visit was also the agreement of the representatives of the Ministry of Interior with their colleagues from London Metropolitan Police about closer co-operation in solving crimes on human trafficking committed against citizens of Belarus on the territory of the UK.

"Many approaches and methods shared by the British colleagues can be successfully used in our country", – said Vladimir Yemelyanov, representatives of the Ministry of Interior of Belarus. "Of great interest for us is the experience of the United Kingdom in elaborating a unified set of laws comprising all aspects of the issue of human trafficking, as well as the mechanism of identification and referral of victims of trafficking".

The study visit was not the first one organised within the project. In 2009 Belarusian specialists had a chance to get acquainted with the experience of their colleagues in Germany, Israel and Lithuania. This year the project plans to organise visits to Denmark, Sweden, and Estonia.

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EU TOURIST CROSS-BORDER PROJECT PROMOTE ITSELF AT THE SPRING TOURIST FAIR IN MINSK

On 7-10 April the EU-funded project "Bella Dvina – Crossing the border, discovering the culture, enjoying the nature of the Western Dvina / Daugava river" was present at the 13th spring tourist fair "LEISURE-2010" in Minsk. As a result, Polotsk City Executive Committee, Lead Partner of the Bella Dvina project, has been awarded with a diploma for creative approach to the design of the Bella Dvina exhibition stand. This is second award of the cross-border region that combines Vitebsk region in Belarus and Latgale region in Latvia.



Project experts presented the common region in with craftwork in the shop "Art City", Polotsk beer, kvass, crusty bread and gingerbread. Visitors to the fair could also take colourful materials, such as brochures, tourist guides and leaflets with description of five new cross-border routes launched by the project. Within four days, Belarusian and Latvian experts have distributed about 4,500 information materials about the region.

"We are highly satisfied with results of the tourist fair", says Nikolai Ilyushenok, Vice-Chairman of the Polotsk City Executive Committee. "We hope that now, when so many people are aware of our region, that the flow of tourists to the Vitebsk region and Latgale will increase. And we will be more than happy to welcome new guests in Bella Dvina."

The project is implemented within the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme aiming to support cross-border cooperation between the border regions of Belarus, Latvia and Lithuania. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to development of tourism in the border regions of Belarus and Latvia through creation of a common cross-border tourist space along the Western Dvina / Daugava.

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

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

27 APRIL, HALCH VILLAGE, VETKA DISTRICT

Official opening of Sports School of the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Combat the Negative Effects of the Chernobyl Disaster in Belarus"

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29 APRIL, VITEBSK

Workshop on Common home ownership: practices, problems and prospects in Belarus of the EU-funded project "Participative Housing Reforms"

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5 MAY, BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY, MINSK

Presentation of the Kyoto protocol project

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13 MAY, MINSK

Opening of the youth multi-service centre promoting youth employment and business training of the EU-UNDP Project "Preventing, Fighting and Addressing the Social Consequences of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Belarus"

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27 MAY, MINSK

Competitiveness Round Table organised by the Belarus EU Business Council

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