



## EU CO-OPERATION WITH BELARUS

**The principal objective of EU co-operation with Belarus is to support the needs of the country's population. Up to now, Belarus has received far less assistance than its neighbours because of policies which have prevented the EU from offering Belarus full participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy.**

The decisions of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council of 13 October 2008 opened the door for a new phase in the EU's cooperation with Belarus. The EU has welcomed the reforms made by Belarus and hopes to set relations with Minsk on a new and better path. If Belarus resumes momentum, it is expected that many new opportunities for EU-Belarusian co-operation will emerge. Already Belarus has become a member of the Eastern Partnership which was inaugurated in May 2009. The Eastern Partnership aims to forge closer ties between the EU and 6 Eastern European partners.

EU Co-operation with Belarus has so far been concentrated mainly on the areas of food safety, energy, the environment, and higher education, but also on civil society and the social domain. The EU has also provided assistance to the Chernobyl-affected populations of Belarus as well as to those regions on the border with Poland and Lithuania as part of the EU's Cross-Border Co-operation Programmes.



### EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

#### EU-UNDP PROJECT RAISES AWARENESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**On 2 December the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Preventing, Fighting and Addressing the Social Consequences of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Belarus" organised an awareness-raising event for youth "Stop Human Trafficking". About 250 students from universities, institutes, and vocational training colleges in Minsk attended the event.**

The purpose of the event, which took place on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, was to raise awareness of young people about trafficking in human beings and the basic safety rules to prevent it. Project experts and representatives of public authorities shared information about the rules of safe travelling and living abroad, as well as what principles to use when young people decide to go abroad, and who to consult to be better informed and to make correct decisions. The event closed with the showing of the documentary "Inhuman Traffic", featuring the world-famous actress Angelina Jolie, which tells about harrowing stories of young women trapped in sexual exploitation in Europe. It is planned that in 2010 such awareness-raising events targeting young people will be held in all oblasts of Belarus.

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#### EU SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHERNOBYL-AFFECTED AREAS OF BELARUS

**On 7 December the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Combat the negative effects of the Chernobyl disaster in Belarus" organised a round table in the Gomel region on "Opportunities to support existing and create new jobs and additional opportunities to increase revenues". Representatives of the Ministry of Emergencies, the project staff, district and regional authorities, public and farmers' organisations, the Employment Fund, as well as representatives of local small and medium businesses participated in challenging debates and made speeches.**

During the event the most problematic issues of the Gomel region as employment of vulnerable groups, improvement their incomes' level, creation of new jobs were discussed. At the moment, the project has chosen 4 pilot districts of Gomel region: Khoyniki, Buda-Kashalyova, Vetka and Zhytkavichy. Representatives of the Employment Fund have provided the latest results of research in the field of employment, statistics of Gomel region, and shared positive experiences of retraining courses and employment of local youth. Representatives of agro-tourism and farmers noted an increase in the number of guests of agro complexes over the past few years. The project with a budget of €1.5 million aims at promoting the enhancement of the livelihoods of rural residents in the Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus through community mobilisation, development of participatory planning and improved social delivery, as well as through provision of economic development opportunities for the most vulnerable groups of local population.

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## EU-UNICEF PROJECT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN IN CHERNOBYL AFFECTED AREAS

On 15 December the EU-funded and UNICEF-implemented project "Children of Chernobyl" was officially launched at the press conference in Minsk. The event brought together representatives of the EU Delegation, UNICEF, Ministry of Health, and leading Belarusian media. The project with a budget of €650,000 aims that newborns, children, youth, and women in the Chernobyl affected areas are benefiting from quality health care and have equal access to such services.



The Head of the EU Delegation, Ambassador José Manuel Pinto Teixeira noted at the press conference that the "Follow-up of the Chernobyl disaster is still affecting people's life. The European Union in partnership with the UNICEF take active efforts to strengthen services and provide assistance and adequate information". The project will upgrade the necessary medical equipment in order to improve the quality of medical services: Fetal cardio monitors, children's lung ventilators and incubators for newborns will be delivered to four district hospitals of Gomel oblast, five district hospitals of Mogilev oblast and three district hospitals and prenatal centres of Brest oblast. It will improve in access and quality of youth friendly medical and counselling services and promote healthy lifestyles by opening and equipping of 5 youth friendly health centres in Gomel, Mogilev and Brest regions. The project experts will develop capacity of key medical professionals in the areas of newborn intensive care and youth health, and improve parental skills and knowledge on young children upbringing.

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## EU-UNDP PROJECT DRAWS PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT

On 18 December the EU-funded and UNDP-implemented project "Building Capacity for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Implementation of Environmental Conventions in Belarus" organised an awareness action "Climate is changing. And You?". The event was conducted in the Minsk Environmental School No. 19, and was devoted to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen and the output of the project "dynamic" brochure on reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in atmosphere.



This environmental action was intended to draw public attention to the agenda of the Copenhagen Summit, and to demonstrate real contribution of the EU and UNDP in addressing greenhouse gas emissions. A thematic ecological drawings, posters, comics and flyers competition has been held as part of campaign. Participants had a possibility to see children's theatrical show in costumes made from household waste and natural materials. Project experts presented the "dynamic" booklet, which allows calculating the personal "carbon track" and made recommendations for its reduction. Winners of children's contests and all participants of environmental projects were awarded with prizes by the project. The project with a budget of €1.67 million aims at developing Belarus' national capacity in the field of strategic environmental assessment and implementation of key international environmental conventions, and will support creation of mechanisms to sustain and expand this capacity in the long term.

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

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## EU PROJECT PROMOTES A JOINT BELARUSIAN-LATVIAN TOURISTIC REGION

In December the EU-funded project "Bella Dvina - Crossing the Border, Discovering the Culture, Enjoying the Nature of the Western Dvina/Daugava River Space" finished the strategic planning component and presented in Dauvgavpils the Strategy for Promotion of the Belarusian-Latvian "Bella Dvina" region till 2020. In November the project experts also presented in Polotsk the Tourism Development Strategy for Vitebsk region for 2010-2017.



Both documents were elaborated by the Latvian experts, which studied the tourism objects of the region, consulted local authorities and tourist agencies. The implementation of the both strategies started in 2010 according to the recommendation of the Tourism Department of the Republic of Belarus. The provisions of the Tourism Development Strategy will be used for elaboration of local, regional and national programmes, in particular for the Tourism Development Programme of the Vitebsk region for 2010-2017. The "Bella Dvina" project with a total budget of €720,000 is implemented in the framework of the European Union's Neighbourhood Programme and has the aim to establish a cross-border tourist's space along the Dvina/Daugava river valley between Dauvgavpils and Polotsk with prolongation to Vitebsk. By new planning methods, the "Bella Dvina" region is developed and promoted as one discovery space with a common branding by new marketing methods.

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## EU AMBASSADOR VISITS DOG TRAINING CENTRE IN SMORGON

On 22 January the Head of the EU Delegation, Ambassador José Manuel Pinto Teixeira visited the Dog Training Centre of the State Border Guard Service in Smorgon. Ambassador Pinto Teixeira's visit took place on the occasion of the centre's hosting on an international seminar, "Development and Perspectives for co-operation by dog training centres of border guard services of the CIS and the European Union". Participants from Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland took part in the seminar.

Ambassador Pinto Teixeira stated during the opening ceremony of the seminar, that "the European Union realises the importance of border guard dogs in securing borders". The EU-financed BOMBEL-1 and BOMBEL-2 projects (Enhancing Border Management in the Republic of Belarus), aimed to assist the Border Guards of the Republic of Belarus to combat trans-border organised crime, establish and apply modern border control systems, manage migration flows, use modern communications equipment, means of automation, border and radiation monitoring, and increase regional cooperation. The projects included a component related to the development of the Dog Training Centre in Smorgon. This component developed the infrastructure of the centre and increased the number of service dogs provided for the Border Guards, improved their gene pool and housing conditions and raised the quality of their training.



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## EU-FUNDED PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2 FEBRUARY, TOURIST HOTEL, GRODNO

The EU-funded programme "Cross Border Cooperation Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus" within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will organise a Regional Seminar for Potential Applicants and Partners of the Programme

More information at: <http://www.enpi-cbc.eu/>

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### 4 FEBRUARY, BELARUSIAN NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, MINSK

The EU-funded National Tempus Office will organise the Tempus Information Day for Belarus.

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### 3 FEBRUARY, CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, MINSK

The Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus Cross Border Cooperation Programme within the ENPI will organise a Regional Seminar for Potential Applicants and Partners of the Programme

More information at: <http://www.enpi-cbc.eu/>

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### 4 FEBRUARY, LUCHESA HOTEL, VITEBSK

The Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus Cross Border Cooperation Programme within the ENPI will organise a Regional Seminar for Potential Applicants and Partners of the Programme

More information at: <http://www.enpi-cbc.eu/>

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### 6 FEBRUARY, CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, MINSK

The EU Delegation to Belarus, the Office for a Democratic Belarus and the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies will organise a seminar "Sharing Knowledge: Education Policy"

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### 9-10 FEBRUARY, CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, MINSK

Under patronage of the EU Delegation to Belarus, the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies will organise the Third Annual Conference in cooperation with the EU Institute for Security Studies (Paris) and Belarus Country Office of Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Vilnius).

More information at: <http://www.belinstitute.eu/>

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### 10 FEBRUARY, ACADEMY OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, MINSK

Project Steering Committee meeting EU-UNDP-UNICEF Project "Preventing, Fighting and Addressing the Social Consequences of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Belarus"

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