



Drawing from exhibition
on climate week in Tbilisi
on 24-31 October, 2009



European Union

Protection of Georgia's unique environment

The protection of environment is among the European Union's worldwide key objectives. Given its size, Georgia is one of the richest countries in the world when it comes to diversity and uniqueness of its environment. The European Union assists Georgia not only to implement real and practical environmental projects but also helps policy development, strategies and legislation. In 2010 there are ongoing EU-funded environmental projects worth € 20 million.

The activities financed by the EU concern all the key areas of environmental protection:

- climate change
- nature protection
- waste management
- protection of air
- improvement of water quality
- prevention of natural disasters.

Many activities also focus on raising awareness about the environment and encourage the community to become involved in helping the environment. Many projects are implemented by non-governmental organisations.

Solid waste management

Management of solid waste is one of the most serious environmental problems in Georgia - both hazardous and municipal waste are mostly dumped on landfills, dangerous both to human health and environment, or even dumped in the nature.

The EU approach is based on a safe disposal of hazardous waste on the one hand, and on reuse, recycling or composting of waste from households on the other.

A pilot project, first in this area, was carried out in Kutaisi on management of waste from households (€160.000). Numerous containers were installed in the city for a separate collection of paper and plastics. Special trucks were bought from the project to separately collect the paper and plastics. A factory uses the plastics collected to produce roof tiles. A campaign has been carried out to inform people how to separate waste, how to use organic waste to set up and maintain composts in their back gardens.

Another pilot project (€ 160.000) on management of hazardous waste, first one of this kind in Georgia, a system for separate and safe collection and disposal of toxic waste from hospitals was established in Batumi and Kobuleti. The toxic waste is separately collected in special containers in hospitals; a special truck collects these containers and transports them to an incinerator where this waste is burnt under extreme temperatures and pressure and thus disposed of in a safe manner.

Nevertheless, the waste management system would not function efficiently without a proper legislation and strategy. The EU therefore finances other projects for a total amount of € 2.7 million within which a proper waste registry will be set up, a waste management plan drafted and the legislation on waste management prepared. Also the capacity of institutions which shall implement this new system, especially on regional level, will be improved.

Protection of water

The EU approach to water protection is based on an integrated management of river basins. These basins usually cover the territory of several countries. The largest one in the southern Caucasus is the Mtkvari(Kura)-Araks river basin. The EU helps countries of the southern Caucasus to protect this river basin through several projects (€ 5 million for Georgia) to improve protection of this river basin by developing their water legislation, collecting the necessary data, and providing them with laboratory equipment for monitoring water quality. The EU is also very active in the protection of the Black Sea and its coast.

The European Commission is the European Union's executive body

"The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".

European Union ongoing funding in 2010:

€ 20 million for the
environment sector

Major areas of activity:

Waste Management

Protection of water quality

Protection of air quality

Prevention of natural disasters



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Main achievements:

- New waste management system put in place for separate collection of paper and plastics

- Protection of the waters of the Mtkvari(Kura)-Araks river basin

- Protection of the Tusheti and Vashlovani protected areas.

Climate change

The EU supports Georgia to draft its climate adaptation strategy, to develop so called Clean Development Mechanism projects (financed by international investors aiming to decrease the green house gas emissions), also to inform the public on climate change. The European Union initiated and financed the first Climate week in Georgia in October 2009 which comprised of more than 100 events informing about different aspects of climate change.

Nature protection – biodiversity

There is an unusually high number of so called indigenous plants and animals unique to Georgia. The preservation of this singular natural heritage is supported by the EU in Tusheti and Vashlovani national parks. The idea of this € 890.00 project is to help these regions find a balance between the interests of local population and nature protection objectives. The EU also supports protection of forest and encourages the enforcement of forest law (€ 2 million).

Air protection

The quality of air, especially in major Georgian cities, is rather poor. In response to this problem the EU is helping Georgia to monitor dangerous substances in the air and to draft legislation and strategies to improve the current situation (€ 1 million).

Prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters

Natural and man-made disasters, such as landslides, erosions, draughts and floods, become more and more frequent in Georgia. The EU therefore helps the most affected regions, especially in the mountains, to prevent and reduce natural disasters risks. At the same time the EU enables these regions to respond to these disasters in a co-ordinated and efficient manner. € 2 million have been granted to this sector.

Environment prevents conflicts

The European Commission is one of the co-founders of the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) for the Caucasus which implements several projects financed by the EU. The Board chaired by the European Commission, as well as the executive body of this unique institution comprise representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The projects managed by the REC Caucasus on sustainable land management, promotion of community forest policy, Caucasus convention on nature protection, protection of Mtkvari(Kura)-Araks river basin and others, are implemented in the three countries of the southern Caucasus and some of them even on northern slopes of the Great Caucasus. Implementation of these projects requires co-operation of people from all these countries which is the most efficient tool to prevent any future conflicts in this beautiful part of the world.

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Fighting together against the Climate Change

The first Climate Week took place in Georgia on 24-31 October, 2009. Its objective was to raise awareness on climate change among as many stakeholders in Georgia as possible, prior to the decisive UN Conference on Climate Change in December in Copenhagen.

A series of events all around Georgia represented a unique opportunity to raise awareness through media about climate change. Georgian population, especially youth, widely responded taking great interest in the environment preservation through a large participation in these events. The Climate Week was co-ordinated by the Green Movement and co-financed by the European Union.

At the conference held during the *Climate Week*, the representatives of Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs agreed on a joint position to tackle climate change.