



“Media for improved reporting on the environment and natural resources in Central Asia” Project, launched in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 22nd April 2016 – International NGO ‘Internews’ hosted the project launch event for the project entitled “Media for improved reporting on the environment and natural resources in Central Asia” financed by the European Union and implemented by Internews. The event gathered local and international partners, government representatives, and well-known media and civil society experts, all keen to begin actively cooperating and providing new opportunities for information sharing on the environment and natural resources. The total budget of the project is 1.5 million euro and the project will be implemented in 18 months.

In his opening remarks Ambassador Cesare De Montis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic, stressed the importance of the regional cooperation on the environment and natural resources initiatives among all interested stakeholders in the region. “The environment and natural resources do not know borders. While countries certainly have national policies on how to address environmental challenges and use natural resources, regional cooperation is key for effective action and sustainability, in Central Asia perhaps even more so than in other regions. Sound policies are based on valid information. With the project that we launch today the European Union supports that citizens and policy-makers have improved access to information and data on the environment and natural resources in Central Asia. I want to thank in advance all those journalists, media and civil society organisations who will engage with the project and wish you every success,” said Ambassador De Montis.

In his presentation, the Internews Project Director, Farhod Rahmatov, underlined the project’s central objectives and activities. According to Mr. Rahmatov, the project aims to enhance regional efforts to improve citizens’ and policy-makers’ access to information and communication on the environment and natural resources in the Central Asia Region.

“This is an issue that has needed attention for a long time because it is difficult to overestimate the impact of environmental problems in our region, both for each individual country and for the region as a whole. One of the key areas which should be developed is access to information.” said the event participant Irina Chestyakova, a communication expert at Centre for Climate Change in the Kyrgyz Republic.

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The project will deliver a capacity development programme that includes professional journalism trainings, joint thematic workshops for civil society organisations (CSOs) and media professionals, and the disbursement of small content production grants for creating media content on environmental topics.

“This is an important project. Every year, environmental problems are becoming more significant,” said Ryspek Toktonaliev, press officer at the State Agency for Geology and Mineral Resources under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, who participated in the event.

The project’s goals are to improve communication and collaboration between CSOs and media professionals from Central Asian countries through regional exchange reporting trips, thematic educational events on the environment and natural resources, and professional networking events. Working together with local CSOs and media companies, the project will develop and deploy sustainable interactive tools and platforms including data visualisations, mapping, and ways to improve civil engagement with environmental protection issues.

“At the moment we have a great need for the capacity building of journalists writing on environmental topics,” said Mars Amanaliev, Head of the Ozone Center of Kyrgyzstan. “Therefore, we are definitely going to collaborate in the framework of the Internews’ project, and share those information and experience that has been developed previously and we will make specific contribution to the project within its action plan,” stressed Mr. Amanaliev.

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Internews is an international non-profit media development organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard. Formed in 1982, Internews has worked in more than 90 countries, and currently has offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North America.

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