EU AND UKRAINE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

On the occasion of last year’s International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, European Commission Vice-President Jacques Barrot, said: “Fighting the drug problem effectively requires strategies that are based on facts and that can be adapted to respond to new situations; this is not about ideology or political dogma, but rather choosing actions that work in practice”.

The European Union’s approach to the drug problem has been based on an approach balancing prevention and treatment, on the one hand, and repression of drug trafficking, on the other. In 2004 Europe devised a strategy to combat drugs for the period 2005-2012. This strategy is set out in detail in two consecutive four-year action plans (2004-2008 and 2009-2012).

The new drugs plan was presented by the Commission in September 2008. The action plan provides for a major new Commission initiative, the European Alliance on Drugs, to be launched in all of the Member States in June. Its aim is to mobilise the public and raise awareness, particularly among young people, about drugs and the dangers of drug abuse.

Since 2003, the EU has successfully implemented a comprehensive anti-drugs programme in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, the BUMAD programme (see below). The European Union has made available EUR 6.5 million for the programme for the period 2003-2008. The project, implemented by UNDP, aimed at making legislation compliant to EU and international standards; improving the law enforcement agencies’, border guards’ and customs services’ response possibilities; establishing a national drugs observatory in order to have reliable data available; preventing drug abuse through targeted information dissemination; and creating a maritime information exchange and co-operation network between the customs services of the Black Sea area.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DRUG ABUSE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING

On 25 February 2009 in Kyiv took place the Final Conference of the EU-funded, UNDP-implemented Programme for the Prevention of the Drug Abuse and the Fight against Drug Trafficking in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova (BUMAD). Reinforcing capacity development and regional cooperation in addressing drug problems in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova were the focus of the international conference.

According to Ambassador José Manuel Pinto Teixeira, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine, the BUMAD Programme achieved close cooperation between EU services and services in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. He also added that “the results of BUMAD activities made a significant contribution into the improvement of national measures regarding illicit drug trafficking issues”.

Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, along with other European countries, are affected by the drug abuse problem to a significant level. In order to cope effectively with the negative consequences of the drug abuse and illicit trafficking the sustained political commitment and resource allocation at the national and international level is required, as many experts agree. Speaking of BUMAD’s contribution to the regional drug control system, Oleg Shutyak, First Deputy Head of Drug Enforcement Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, said that BUMAD made a considerable contribution to reducing drug abuse in Ukraine. For instance he said that “over the Programme’s implementation period, in three years, the Ukrainian services seized over one tonne of Afghan-made heroin – the amount which exceeds all other heroine seizures, which were recorded not only in Ukraine’s history, but in the USSR as well”.

He called on EU and UNDP to continue providing technical and financial assistance to Ukrainian drug enforcement institutions, as international cooperation plays crucial role in fighting organized crime and drug trafficking.

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EU MEMBER STATES AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION AMBASSADORS VISITED CRIMEA

From 26 to 28 February a group of Ambassadors from a number of EU Member States and the European Commission visited the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) where they had a joint meeting with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of the ARC, the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the ARC and the First Deputy Minister of Economy of the ARC. They had also meetings with representatives of the Majlis of Crimean Tatars, civil society organisations, representatives of business and media.

The visit included also Sevastopol where meetings with the Head of Sevastopol City State Administration and the Head of Sevastopol City Council were held. The high-ranking guests paid also visits to Zvizdne village, the site of one of the EU-funded, UNDP-implemented Community-Based Approach projects, and to businesses with private EU investments.

The ambassadors familiarised themselves with the socio-economic situation in Crimea and presented a Joint Cooperation Initiative in Crimea, a proposal for a co-ordinated approach to promote social and economic development by the European Commission and a group of interested EU Member States, so far Finland, Hungary, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The Commission and Member States will work to identify the needs of Crimea and develop programme activities in the field of institutional capacity-building, decentralised co-operation with civil society, regional development, investment promotion, twinning with EU cities and regions, and people-to-people contact.

Summing up the visit, the members of the delegation expressed their hope that the Joint Initiative is just the beginning of a dynamic and continuing process, opened to new members and ideas, because the common goal is to promote the development of regions in Ukraine with the combined support of multiple EU actors.

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT NEWS

MID-TERM CONFERENCE REVIEWS 1ST PHASE OF EU-FUNDED PROJECT ON MIGRATION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

On 25 February 2009 the EU-funded project “Capacity Building and Technical Support to Ukrainian authorities to Effectively Respond to Irregular Transit-Migration – A comprehensive and complementary approach to migration management support in Ukraine” (GDISC-ERIT Ukraine) held a steering committee meeting to mark the completion of the first implementation phase of the project.

The GDISC-ERIT project provides for state-to-state knowledge transfer on good migration governance between the migration services of six EU Member States (Czech Republic, as the project lead country, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom) and Ukraine. During the conference the Mid-term Report was presented, which outlined progress made as well as remaining challenges with regard to the ambitious project objectives. Most of the activities were implemented as foreseen and upon request additional have been added to the original plan. Several workshops, seminars and trainings were held in Kyiv and other regions of Ukraine contributing to improved migration management were held in the fields of asylum, return, visa, detention etc. Furthermore, to illustrate the examples of good practices provided, study visits to the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland, focusing on the European Union practices on detention and screening centres, visa issuing and asylum procedure, were successfully organised.

Among the results achieved we can mention that specifications for the actual procurement of equipment for two already opened detention centres in the north-western part of Ukraine as well as 5 temporary holding centres around the eastern border of Ukraine have been elaborated. Intensive consultations on various alternatives for a visa IT system constitute a solid basis for the plan made on the specific technical aspects of such a system. The Director of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, Mr. Tomas Haisman, has expressed his satisfaction with the project results so far, proving the efficiency of the state-to-state experience exchange approach. According to Mr. Haisman, “the GDISC-ERIT Ukraine project is the best example of migration partnership in practice”.

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LAUNCH OF EU-FUNDED PROJECT TO SUPPORT UKRAINE’S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

On 5 March 2009 the project “Implementation of Ukraine’s Commitments under WTO and European Neighbourhood Policy frameworks in the rural sector” has been launched at the Ministry of Agricultural Policy of Ukraine. The project is financed by the EU and aims at assisting close co-operation between the Ukraine and the EU, as well as harmonization of Ukrainian standards according to WTO requirements. The project is based on the application of Sector-Wide Approach in rural sector of Ukraine’s economy.

Dirk Schuebel, Acting Head of Delegation of European Commission to Ukraine, Valentina Zavalevska, Deputy Minister of Agricultural Policy of Ukraine and Bohdan Drozdowskij, Project Leader participated in the official project launch along with international experts who will directly implement the project in Ukraine and representatives from pilot regions.

The Project will be realised in three priority sectors: Food safety; Development of the infrastructure of wholesale markets and Development of rural areas. The project will also increase the potential of the Ministry of Agricultural Policy of Ukraine in supervising and coordinating the Sector-Wide Approach through those three components due to the institutional development.

The project uses multimodal approach in resolving agricultural issues and developing Ukrainian rural territory through financial and technical arrangements. Ukraine is to receive modern equipment for crop forecasts and prognoses (MARS system) and equipment for veterinary laboratories after the project completion. The project will last for 38 months and cover several pilot regions. Separate components of the project will be introduced in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Cherkasy, Odesa, Kherson, Liv, Poltava and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts. The total budget of the project is EUR 4.7 million. The project is 100% funded by the European Union.

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ONE HUNDRED UKRAINIAN OFFICIALS BECOME PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH

The EU-funded project “Implementation of Twinning Operations in Ukraine” organised the new round of English Course for 100 Selected Ukrainian Officials of 24 Ministries/Agencies.

On 3 March 2009 at the Main Department of the Civil Service of Ukraine (MDCSU) was held the opening ceremony of the new round of “Twinning English / Professional Skills” Training Course. The course was organised by the Implementation of Twinning Operations in Ukraine project jointly with the Twinning Programme Administration Office within the MDCSU and supported by the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine. Andriy Vyshevsy, Deputy Head of the Main Department of the Civil Service of Ukraine, in his welcoming speech said that the demand-driven programme is the prologue to a large-scale and regular educational programme for civil servants, which will take place next year according to the decision of the Government of Ukraine. Dr Janos Zakonyi, Team Leader of the project introduced then the training programme, its aims, expected results, methodologies and trainers. During the second part of the evening the participants gave a test of their proficiency in English, which will be the basis of placing them into different groups.

The custom-designed 120 hours’ course that starts the second week of March is a continuation of the last year’s programme, which trained representatives from 14 Ukrainian Ministries and Agencies. In 2009, the number of the authorities almost doubled to 24 with 115 candidates nominated for participation.

Within the ‘Friends of Twinning in Ukraine Training Club’ – a new initiative of the project, to be organised every second Wednesday evening from 18 March 2009 onwards for everybody interested, the participants will discuss specific management and development topics in English with the involvement of high level specialists. The topics, to be advertised in advance, will include time management, negotiations, effective presentations, networking skills and many others. The curriculum also focuses on specific Twinning and EU-related terminology.

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EU-FUNDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN UKRAINE PROGRAMME HELD SEVERAL EVENTS FOR THE 8 MARCH

The EU-funded UNDP-implemented Equal Opportunities and Women’s Rights in Ukraine Programme held on 1-5 March 2009 several events dedicated to the 125 years of the Ukrainian Women’s Movement and the International Women’s Day of 8 March.

On 1-3 March in Kharkiv took place the All-Ukrainian capacity-building educational programme for Heads of Gender Centres. In the event were involved national experts in gender policy, scientists, journalists, education representatives, gender NGOs and students from Kharkiv. On 3 March 2009 the participants visited the expositions of the first Museum of the women’s history, women’s and gender movement in Ukraine, hosted by Kharkiv National University. On 4 March in Kyiv prominent Ukrainian Men created a national network of Men Leaders against domestic violence. Well-known sportsmen, artists and politicians took part in the press-conference as well as Dirk Schuebel, Acting Head of Delegation of European Commission to Ukraine. The first men to become members of the network included Mykola Tomenko, Verkhovna Rada Deputy Speaker, Sergiy Bubka, President of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, Danylo Yanovsky, Honored journalist of Ukraine, Andriy Gusin, famous Ukrainian football player and Ostap Stupka, National Artist of Ukraine.

On 5 March in Kyiv was organised the round table “Women who are changing the world”. Well-known women politicians, businesswomen and public women discussed the women’s participation in social and political life in Ukraine, women’s leadership as a mean of overcoming economic crisis and develop a democratic society etc.

The EU-funded Equal Opportunities and Women’s Rights in Ukraine Programme started on 15 September 2008. The project’s main goal is to support the Government and civil society efforts in promoting gender equality between men and women in all spheres of life and to improve the status of women in Ukraine as an instrument towards achieving the sustainable human development, Ukrainian MDGs and building a democratic state in line with Ukrainian international, constitutional and legal commitments and within the framework of the corresponding Government action plans.

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EU-FUNDED PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS

12-13 MARCH 2009, PUSCHA OZERNA RESORT HOTEL, KYIV
Black Sea Regional workshop "NGO Platform with regard to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution and the Regional Ministerial Conference”
The workshop will be hosted by the Environmental Collaboration for the Black Sea Project (the ECBSea Project). The NGO meeting is expected to have over 50 participants from over 40 organisations from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

More information: www.ecbsea.org

17 MARCH 2009, HOTEL “KYIV”, KYIV
Expert Seminar “The Implementation of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television in Ukraine”
The events is organised by the EU-Council of Europe project “Promotion of European standards in the Ukrainian Media Environment”. The Ukrainian parliamentarians, as well as the representatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe will be present.

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20 MARCH 2009, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, KYIV
Training Seminar for police officers from Kyiv and the regions on Detection and Investigation of corruption offences
This event is organized by the EC/CoE joint project against corruption in Ukraine (UPAC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. Support in the publication of a training manual on detection and prevention of corruption offences elaborated by the Ministry of Interior will also be provided within UPAC.

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This electronic newsletter is produced within the project on Information and PR Activities for the EU and its Programmes in Ukraine. The project is funded by the European Union and is implemented by the KEY Communications Agency.