



EU DELEGATION NEWSLETTER
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EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS IN AZERBAIJAN

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The EU together with its partners from the Ministry of Agriculture have launched a **technical assistance project “Support to E-Agriculture in Azerbaijan: innovative and effective agricultural policy management for higher productivity and competitiveness”**. The aim of the project is to enable a fair and transparent distribution of agricultural subsidies, provide reliable data for use in policy-making and the assessment of policy impacts, and ultimately help to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The Kick-Off Seminar of the project was held on **28 January**.



The **EU-funded “Support to Rural Tourism”** project implemented by Local Governance Assistance PU was finalised in February 2016. The project covered Astara, Masalli, Lerik, Goychay, Ismayilli and Shamakhi rayons. 551 entrepreneurs increased their skills in entrepreneurship and business management, 100 medium and small enterprises participated in the training programme, 61 new business deals were signed, 60 individuals were supported in business registration and start-ups, a pool of



12 skilled trainers of Vocational Schools established, 68 info-sessions conducted, where 1515 youth, of which 473 (31.0%) were female, participated, 459 youth had access to career development advisory services, 62 youth made agreements with local hotels, 12 Community Tourism Councils established, 12 strategies developed, 6 town-hall meetings conducted, the access of 108 entrepreneurs to finance improved, 8 infrastructure projects identified and implemented.

The EU-funded “**Rural Sustainable Development Initiative**” project implemented by “Umid” PU was finalised in February 2016. The project covered Guba-Khachmaz economic zone of Azerbaijan. 21 micro-projects in 18 communities have been finalized (access of 51530 people to social infrastructure and access of 27490 people to basic services has been improved), 31 value adding performance fields (8 hairdressing, 9 barber, 3 video-montage, 3 auto-electric, 2 mobile telephone repairing, 1 computer programmer, 1 auto-painting, 2 auto fitter, 1 photo-montage, 1confectioner) were created. 2500 people benefited through participation in consultation,s trainings and round tables.



Two financial literacy trainings within the framework of the EU-financed Azerbaijan Agricultural Finance Facility – **AZAFF** were organized in cooperation with Farmer House in Quba on **March 9 and April 13**. More than 80 farmers from Quba, Lankaran and their surrounding regions participated to the training. Importance of planning,

farm accountancy and bookkeeping in agriculture, basic characteristics of savings and loan products, roles and working principles of financial institutions, alternative financing options for farmers, tips for establishing a long-term and sustainable relationship with financial institutions, financial projections, need for external funding and timing, estimation of future cash flow and profitability (overall and per activity) are the main topics covered in the financial literacy training.

On **10-11 February** the EBRD has started the second session of a four-day workshop for women entrepreneurs who want to develop their entrepreneurial skills and understand key financial concepts to help their businesses grow. The workshop is a part of the EBRD’s **Women in Business program** funded by EU, Sweden and the Early Transition Countries Fund. 17 women entrepreneurs representing various sectors of the economy attended the workshop. Since starting work in Azerbaijan in 1993, the EBRD has helped over 700 enterprises access consulting know-how to help them develop and grow. The EU has provided 3.7 million euros to support this work in Azerbaijan since 2003.



EDUCATION



New Project for Schools. The Centre of Excellence in EU Studies, ADA University organized EU info sessions for schoolchildren of the 1st-3rd and 10th-11th grades. During March-April, the project held info sessions at 27 schools in Baku and 1 school in Ganja. In total **1577 children** attended these sessions. Experts meet with children and brief them about Europe, European Union, its history, founding countries, objectives and many more. Kids from primaries are also become aware about

EU countries, their culture, historical monuments and some interesting facts.

The Centre of Excellence in EU Studies at ADA University announced the second **EU Summer School** on 30 May - 10 June 2016. All interested candidates are invited to register apply for participation online at ada.edu.az/eusummerschool2016.

Participation is free.

On 21 and 22 April, a validation workshop for two future EU-funded projects was organised among a variety of participants from the Ministry of Education, the EU Delegation and the European Training Foundation. The two projects are going to be in the fields of vocational education and training (VET) and the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Both are important for the support of Azerbaijan's economic diversification, the related skills needs, the transferability of skills and the recognition of skills achieved outside of formal education. Both projects will help improve the quality of education, in particular VET and higher education, and bring Azerbaijan's education system closer to EU standards and best practices.

JUSTICE



On **1 February**, an event was held devoted to the presentation of the Azerbaijani version of the **Handbook on European Law Relating to Asylum, Borders and Immigration**, jointly produced by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) translated within the EU funded “Consolidation of Migration and Border Management Capacities in Azerbaijan” (CMBA) project implemented by IOM. IOM has produced 300 copies of the Azerbaijani version of the handbook and will disseminate them among the relevant state agencies and civil society organizations in the country.

On **2 March** the EU-funded “**Support to Increased Efficiency of Courts, Improved Training of Judges and Judicial Self-governance in Azerbaijan**” project implemented by the Council of Europe held the first meeting of the Steering Committee. The project organised on **2-3 March** a **roundtable** to present the draft court coaching reports developed by the experts of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). Over the course of 2016 the project will support the pilot courts of Azerbaijan to implement such measures, including improved statistical data gathering, analysis, reporting and assessment of court users’ satisfaction.



A **workshop on conducting court users’ satisfaction surveys** was carried out by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) on **17-18 March** in Strasbourg, France, as part of the PCF co-operation projects with the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova. CEPEJ pays particular attention to taking into account users’ expectations on the functioning of the courts and to conducting satisfaction surveys as a



means to identify these expectations and to increase the quality of justice and courts. Judges and court managers should be aware and make use of this tool through cost-effective solutions for implementing surveys in regard to general court users (parties, victims etc.) and specific categories such as lawyers.

CAPACITY BUILDING



maritime safety and prevention of sea pollution in Azerbaijan in conjunction with the legislation of European Union. This is the second Twinning project to the State Maritime Administration. A first Twinning was successfully implemented in 2012-2014 and helped the authorities to prepare the draft maritime law adopted in the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan on April 18, 2014.

On **18 January** the EU Head of Delegation (HOD) had a meeting with the Chairman of the **Chamber of Accounts** to discuss its general activity, current activities and need for assistance to improve the legislation related to the Chamber of Accounts. The HOD briefed about the support provided to the institution, in particular about the expectations towards the future Twinning project. A number of specific issues related to public financial control were discussed where European experience could be useful to reform the system in Azerbaijan. The necessity for capacity building on specific audit types, in particular performance audit was also discussed in the meeting.



On **27 January** a new **EU-funded Twinning project supporting the Central Statistics Committee** towards harmonization of the national statistics system of Azerbaijan in line with EU standards was officially launched. The 1,2 million euro project to be implemented by the German and Bulgarian statistics office will notably aim to further improve the quality of statistics in the area of income and living conditions, on disabled and invalids and tourism.



the country, and expressed his hopes for the successful implementation of the EU funded Twinning project.

In order to discuss the draft civil service training strategy of Azerbaijan and to exchange the experience in countries on the development and implementation of such a strategy, an international roundtable on “Training strategy for civil servants “ was conducted in Baku on **19 February** within the EU-funded project “**Support to civil service training capacities with a focus on EU affairs**”. 30 international and local experts from 7 different countries in South-East and East Europe shared their experiences on the development of civil service training strategies and discussed the obstacles and lessons learnt from the formulation and implementation of such a strategy.



On **24-25 February** a **simulation exercise** has taken place in Baku at the ADA University, built on a scenario where a serious disaster caused by natural hazard had occurred on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and led the Government to request international assistance. The exercise was conducted as part of the EU-funded Programme on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters in the Eastern Partnership

Countries. The exercise was attended by experts from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, from the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Defence, Health, Foreign Affairs, and the State Border Service and State Customs Committee as well as from other governmental and non-governmental entities.



The closing event of the EU funded twinning project **“Support for the development of a modern system of standardization and technical regulations in Azerbaijan”** was held on **10th March**. The State Committee for Standardization, Metrology and Patent started in January 2014 and “twinning” with a consortium from the UK, France and

Slovenia. The project has worked with the State Committee to help improve the system of standardization and technical regulation in line with EU practices to support Azerbaijan, its economy and enterprises.

On **29 March**, the closing event of the EU project on **“Support to civil service training capacities with a focus on EU affairs”** implemented by GIZ was held. A well-elaborated draft civil service training strategy has been developed, a pool of trainers consisting of 8 trainers, who was trained for more than 70 training days, was established, face-to-face training curricula were developed on 9 thematic areas (e.g. Team-building, HR Management, Negotiation skills), approximately 450 civil servants benefitted from trainings during 77 training days in Baku and selected regions. Two e-learning curricula on anti-corruption/ethics and performance-appraisal system in civil service have been developed and



piloted twice.



On **14 March** the **public discussion** on the draft action plans on Anti-Corruption and Open Government Promotion was held within the EU funded project **“Strengthening capacities to Fight and Prevent Corruption in Azerbaijan (PCF-AZ)”** implemented by the Council of Europe. The public discussion, organised in

cooperation with the Commission on Combatting Corruption, Council for State Support to NGOs and the NGO Coalition against Corruption, was very well-attended by 77 people representing the government, civil society and international organisations,. The event proved

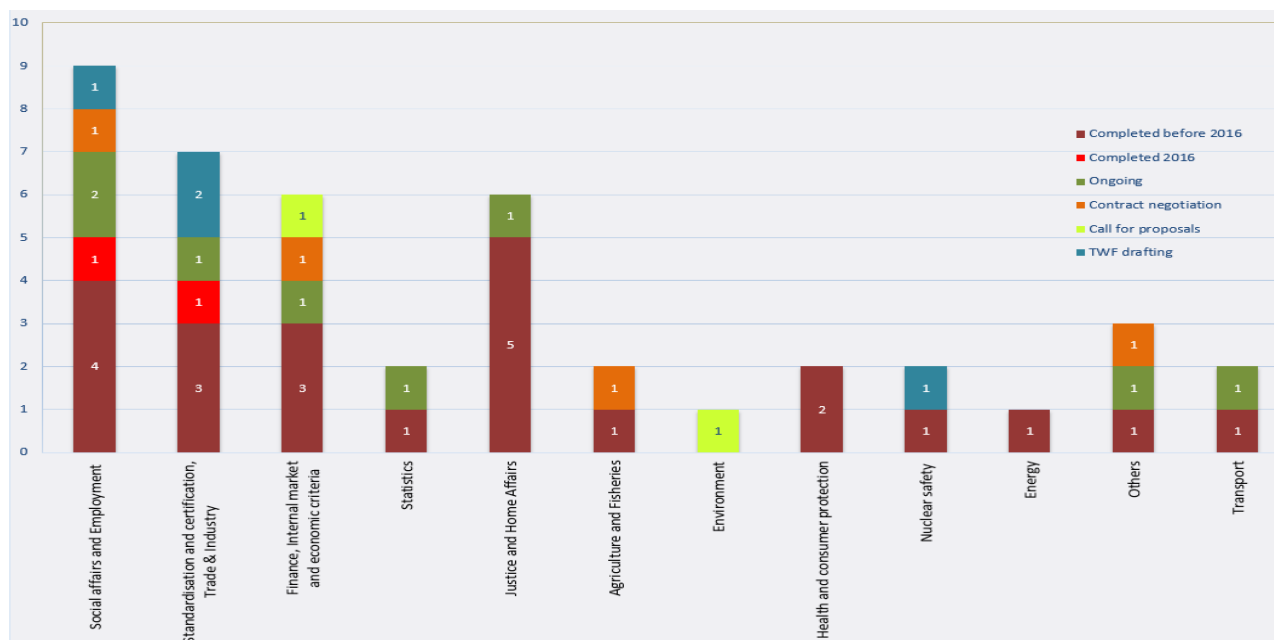
to be productive, as the civil society organisations were able to openly voice their specific proposals for anti-corruption and open governance as well their aspirations in terms of improved operational environment for the NGOs. The Commission plans to conclude the consultation process and submit the Action Plans to the Presidential Administration by mid-April 2016. The final draft of Anti-Corruption and Open Governance Promotion Action Plans is expected to be prepared by the beginning of April, which will be posted on the Commission's website and shared with the stakeholders.

The Kick-Off and Coordination meeting of the **MOBILAZE** project took place on **14 April** in Baku. The representatives of the project implementing partners in Azerbaijan, the EU Delegation and the ICMPD project implementing team discussed the initial findings of the project's inception phase. The event gave an opportunity to the stakeholders to exchange on the modalities of the project's implementation in a greater detail and to define further areas of cooperation.



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TWINNING



On-going projects:

- ◆ Support to the Ministry of Taxes in Human Resources Development (start date: 03/09/2014; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Development of social service provision in Azerbaijan (start date: 01/06/2015; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Support to the Ministry of Education for further adherence of the higher education system to the European Higher Education Area (start date: 01/09/2015; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Support to the State Statistical Committee in Modernisation of the National Statistics System in line with European standards (start date: 28/10/2015; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Support to the Strengthening of the Commissioner for Human rights (Ombudsman Institution) of the Republic of Azerbaijan (start date: 15/02/2016; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Support to the State Maritime Administration to Improve Liability in Maritime Transport (start date: 15/11/2015; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Support to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the modernisation of its policy and management system in the culture sector (start date: 08/02/2016; period: 24 months)
- ◆ Strengthening the metrology system in Azerbaijan (start date: 16/01/2016; period: 24 months)

Fields of the projects at the contract negotiation stage:

- Veterinary Control
- Social protection
- Taxpayers Service Standards
- Civil service

Fields of the projects at the Call for proposals stage:

- Supreme Audit Institutions
- Environment

Fields of the projects at the Preparation stage:

- Copyright
- Accreditation
- Employment
- Radiation safety