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EU4Environment

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine

UNECE to further support Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to strengthen environmental assessment through USD 2.6m EU-funded initiative

Geneva, 02 July 2019

UNECE will support Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to further enhance strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and transboundary environmental impact assessment (EIA) to prevent and mitigate damage to the environment and health from economic growth. This will contribute to a major EU-funded programme aiming at greening national economies and promoting sustainable development in the six Eastern Partnership countries.

Under this initiative, UNECE is supporting the countries to fully align their national legislation with the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA) and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), as well as with relevant EU Directives, and to ensure its effective and systematic application. This assistance will be provided by UNECE in 2019-2022 with funding of USD 2.6 million from the “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) programme.

On 27-28 June, the project’s beneficiary countries, together with the EU and international partners (OECD, UNECE, UN Environment, UNIDO and the World Bank) convened in the project’s inaugural event in Brussels to define priorities, targets and specific actions for its initial period to further protect the environment, harness opportunities for greener development and set mechanisms to manage environmental risks and impacts more effectively.

This provided the opportunity for all partners to agree on country-specific draft work plans including for building adequate capacities for the effective and systematic application of SEA and, as needed, transboundary EIA. Translating these plans into action will enhance transparency of decision-making, cross-sectoral cooperation and public participation and promote transboundary and regional cooperation in assessing environmental impacts.

“Our cooperation on environment with the Eastern Partner countries is stronger than ever and is already bringing tangible benefits to the daily lives of citizens across the region. Together the EU and its six Eastern Partners are working to increase our joint ambition to tackle environmental protection and climate challenges. There is no time to lose. Today’s meeting has brought all partners together to agree on the

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next steps forward.” said Katarína Mathernová, Deputy Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations at the European Commission.

EU4Environment reinforces and sustains the results achieved in the six beneficiary countries with assistance by UNECE under the EU-funded [EaP GREEN](#) project (2013–2018). This contributed to the important efforts made by the countries to comply with international requirements for SEA, including by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, who joined Armenia as Parties to the UNECE Protocol on SEA.

With co-funding from Czechia, UNECE has already launched some EU4Environment-related activities in Georgia. Further support by UNECE will also include legislative assistance, concluding pilot projects related to SEA procedures, preparation of sector- or issue-specific guidelines on SEA and conducting training and awareness raising events, including at sub-regional level.

EU4Environment Action, funded by the European Union, aims to support Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to preserve and better use their natural capital, increase people's environmental well-being, and grasp new development opportunities. With a budget of some EUR 20 million for all six countries, EU4Environment is carried out from 2019 to 2022 with implementation support by five international partners: OECD, UNIDO, UNEP, UNECE and the World Bank.

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