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**EU4Environment**  
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

## EU4Environment helps the Eastern partner countries to invest in a sustainable way

Geneva, 29 June 2022

An effective system for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) supports countries in building a green and sustainable future and achieving climate commitments so that both people and nature can benefit. After the COVID-19 crisis challenging healthcare systems and economies world-wide, the general economic recovery efforts make systematic and effective environmental assessment more necessary than ever. Their use is essential to greening the investments required for this recovery.

SEA and EIA are also expected to have an important role to play in the recovery from another crisis – the military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. SEA, in particular, will be essential to ensuring the sustainability of Ukraine’s recovery early on in planning process.

The Eastern partner countries committed to align their environmental assessments systems with EU law and international practice more generally. These commitments arise from the countries’ bilateral agreements with the European Union, the Eastern Partnership cooperation framework, as well as the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on SEA.

The European Union, in cooperation with UNECE, helps the countries apply environmental assessments more effectively and systematically. This assistance is a part of the regional programme “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment). Since 2019, the programme has been supporting the Eastern partner countries in greening their economies, based on EU funding of nearly 20 million euros.

On 29 June 2022, UNECE organised a virtual subregional workshop on the practical application of SEA and transboundary EIA. This event gathered more than 90 representatives of environmental and sectoral authorities. The participants took stock of the progress achieved by the Eastern partner countries over the past two years and discussed lessons learnt on the development of SEA and EIA systems. Part of the event was dedicated to the SEA pilot projects.

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Furthermore, the event contributed towards introducing the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) for the Eastern Partnership and the “Global Gateway”, a new European strategy to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world. Speaking during the workshop, **Mr. Nicholas Cendrowicz, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission** noted: *“Our commitments under the Economic and Investment Plan remain as important as ever. The EU aims to support smart investments in quality infrastructure, respecting the highest social and environmental standards. Around half of the planned investments of the EIP are green investments. Also, we will work hand in hand with Ukraine and other partners on a post-war green reconstruction. We are thus directly contributing to the objectives of the Global Gateway Strategy, which is a template for sustainable and trusted connections that will work for people and the planet.”*

**Ms. Tea Aulavuo, Secretary to the UNECE Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA** remarked that *“After the COVID-19 crisis, the Espoo Convention, its Protocol, and the European Union’s EIA and SEA Directives provide robust legal and institutional frameworks and effective procedures that will help countries in their efforts to green the recovery, and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and climate commitments.”*

Discussed in several workshop sessions along with recommendations for maximising their effectiveness, the SEA pilot projects relate to spatial planning, renewable energy and industrial development. The pilot projects are a key element of capacity-building under EU4Environment to support the countries in the hands-on application of SEA and to demonstrate benefits of SEA in different sectors.

EU4Environment Action, funded by the European Union, aims to support the EU’s Eastern partner countries 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, EU4Environment is carried out from 2019 to 2022 (with the extension in progress till 2023) with implementation support by five international partners: OECD, UNIDO, UNEP, UNECE and the World Bank.

For more information on EU4Environment [www.eu4environment.org](http://www.eu4environment.org)

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