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Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) Stakeholders meet in Azerbaijan to discuss progress on resource efficiency

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On Thursday, 28 July 2022, the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) Stakeholders Group Meeting took place in Baku, Azerbaijan. The in-person event comprised important representatives from the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Energy, the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (SMBDA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), associations for the development of industry, academia, and experts. Hosted as part of the activities run under the EU-funded, EU4Environment Action dedicated to [Circular Economy and New Growth Opportunities](#) in Azerbaijan, the meeting focused on two major topics: resource efficiency and means to achieve green growth.

*In the “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development” agenda, three out of the five identified priorities for the next decade are directly related to RECP. Hence, the implementation of these activities will directly contribute to several strategic documents adopted by the Republic of Azerbaijan. As for the industrial and sustainable development of the country, some of the key areas we focus on are building a steadily growing and competitive economy, a competitive human capital and space for modern innovations, as well as investing in a clean environment and national “green growth”, said **Ms. Konul Aliyeva**, Deputy Head of Department of Cooperation with International Organizations, Ministry of Economy.*

As Earth’s natural resources are finite, once their flow through the economy reaches its limit, the only way to maintain economic growth is to ensure resource efficiency, that is: to find the means to generate greater returns from the same number of resources. Hence, RECP is not only essential for economic growth, but is also an important enabler for industries to increase their competitiveness, create jobs, and stimulate innovation while investing in recycling and resource recovery.

The cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU on the environment and climate goals has been strengthened through a series of regional programmes (including EU4Environment) as well as bilateral projects, notably those related to air quality and industrial emissions. These initiatives support Azerbaijan in meeting its Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement, as well as in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The cooperation also helps the country to better grasp economic restructuring, modernize, and make the necessary investments to achieve its climate change and

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environmental management targets, said **Mr. Faig Mutallimov**, Head of Department of Ecological Policy, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.

In Azerbaijan, the implementation of the 1st phase of the RECP activities was launched in May 2021, when UNIDO contracted a National Implementing Partner comprised of a consortium of companies. Since then, both achievements and challenges have been reported in the efforts to support the creation of circular value chains through RECP and industrial waste maps (IWM). Thus, the meeting served as a platform to raise awareness about the stage of these activities and to engage the RECP Stakeholders' Group members in discussing opportunities, challenges and means to overcome them in order to further institutionalize and upscale RECP and foster green growth in the country.

*The UNIDO mandate, focusing on Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, is to make industries not only profitable within the economy, but also less harmful to the environment. In particular, we are promoting Circular Economy as a means to close the loops within and between manufacturing enterprises (in terms of goods, processes, and services). We need to consider that working with Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), which are the backbone of the economy in many countries, is the way to achieve a better environment for all and reduce the effects of climate change, said **Ms. Tatiana Chernyavskaya**, EU4Environment Project Manager, Directorate for Environment and Energy, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).*

Background

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment) programme aims to help the EU’s Eastern Partner countries to preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts. The Action’s implementation period is 2019-2023.

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