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virtual meeting

First Regional Action Group Meeting

SUMMARY RECORD

Background

The meeting presented and discussed the proposed “EU4Environment – Water Resources and Data” programme work packages and inception phase findings. The “EU4Environment – Water Resources and Data” programme is funded by the European Union (EU) within the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP). The meeting was attended by over 100 participants, including high-level officials from EaP countries, nominated National Focal Points and representatives of Civil Society Organisations, IFIs, the European Commission and the Implementing Partners. A list of participants can be found [here](#).

Item 1. Opening Remarks

Ms. Diana Jabłońska, Head of Unit Georgia, Moldova, Economic Investment Plan, DG NEAR, European Commission, welcomed participants and opened the meeting. Ms. Jabłońska highlighted the EU role in supporting the partner countries’ green recovery. She stressed that the EU remains committed to work together with the Eastern Partner countries to overcome the impacts of the war against Ukraine. The long-term objectives of the EaP policy beyond 2020 emphasise recovery, resilience and reform as key building blocks of the future agenda. The centrepiece of this agenda is the [Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership](#). The new programme is expected to play a supporting role for implementing the Plan, in particular as concerns investments in cleaner air and water. Ms. Jabłońska reiterated the fact that the green transition can only happen with joint ownership and engagement of all parts of society. A Team Europe approach will ensure that the green transition is fair and does not leave anybody behind.

Ms. Monika Mörth, Managing Director, Environment Agency Austria, emphasised Austria’s support to countries in transition and welcomed the recently increased ambitions of Eastern Partner countries towards European integration. This ambition will deepen modernisation and transformation process in all environmental policy areas. Ms. Mörth looked forward to implementation of the new programme together with EU partners as well as UNECE and OECD in all Eastern Partners countries.

Mr. Eric Tardieu, Director General, International Office for Water, France, stressed development of local capacity both in terms of equipment and expertise and cooperation between countries towards the improved management of water resources. He also expressed the importance of the pillars of integrated water resource management including improved governance, medium- and long-term planning, monitoring and data management, financial mechanisms and awareness raising to implement actions and to build sustainable resource management.

Mr. Heinz Habertheuer, Director of Department of Programmes and Projects International, Austrian Development Agency, presented ADA’s role in supporting the progress in EaP countries, including co-financing this programme. He highlighted the role of the programme to achieve environmental and climate protection.

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Item 2. Presentation of the proposed Programme work packages and inception phase findings by Implementing Partners

The Implementing Partners presented the focus areas, expected outcomes, outputs, and planned activities of the programme, indicating how they would contribute to improved water resources management and more sound evidence from data in support of environmental policies and investments. The presentation delivered by the partners [can be found here](#).

Senior representatives from each Eastern Partnership country acknowledged progress made in this area thanks to EU support and welcomed the new programme, providing feedback on their current trends and priorities for water management and environmental data. Positive feedback on the implementing partner presentation and description of country priorities was provided by Ms Gayane Gabrielyan, Deputy Minister of Environment, Armenia; Mr. Faig Mutallimov, Head of Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan; Ms. Maia Javakhishvili, Deputy Head of Environment and Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia; Mr. Radu Cazacu, Deputy Director, Agency Apele Moldovei, Republic of Moldova; and Mr. Ruslan Grechanyk, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Nature Resources, Ukraine.

Item 3. Feedback from NGOs, EU funded projects and Development Cooperation Partners

Mr. Ruslan Havrilyuk of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum provided feedback on its priorities for the new programme, including the need for support to open access environmental data and improving the state of water management within the region. The need for regional cooperation was noted.

Mr. Krzysztof Michalak of the OECD, and Action Leader for EU4Environment Green Economy, welcomed the new programme to the “EU4Environment” family and looked forward to progressing areas identified as opportunities for collaboration.

Mr. Marco Beros of the European Investment Bank (EIB) highlighted EIB’s “Climate Action Commitment” for the water sector and beyond and expressed readiness to interact in the context of the new programme. He shared details of EIB-funded water projects and planned interventions for 2021-2027 and the important role of Technical Assistance. The EaP countries are covered by “EIB Global”, a specialised arm dedicated to increasing the impact of international partnerships and development finance, especially within the Team Europe initiative.

Mr. Raphael Jozan of Agence Française de Development (AFD) underlined the synergies between development cooperation partners and the new programme, highlighting concrete examples of AFD work in EaP countries.

Item 5. Next steps and closing remarks

Mr. Alexander Zinke, Action Leader, Environment Agency Austria, presented next steps, stating that the inception report will be finalised during the summer with country specific chapters shared with national focal points.

Ms. Michaela Hauf, Team Leader for Green and Connectivity at DG NEAR, noted progress made since the regional kick-off in February 2022, noted the support of country nominated experts and thanked meeting participants for their active engagement in discussions.

The Summary Record and the meeting documentation was prepared by the Implementing Partners (OECD, UNECE, Austrian Environment Agency, Austrian Development Agency and the International Office of Water).

Disclaimer:

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