



Water Laboratory Day in Georgia: European Union provides laboratory equipment to detect industrial chemicals and pesticides in water

Tbilisi, Georgia, 30 October - The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and the European Union celebrates the Water Laboratory Day to mark new laboratory capacities provided by the European Union in the framework of the EU-funded project “European Union Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership Countries” (EUWI+).

Through the recent upgrade of the water laboratory at the National Environmental Agency, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture now conducts state-of-the-art water analysis and provides certified laboratory capacities which advance the protection of water and river basins in Georgia. The new devices are able to detect a much wider range of industrial chemicals and pesticides, many of which are cancerogenic, neurotoxic, or bioaccumulating. With this expansion of the laboratory, more pollutants can now be monitored and subsequently managed with greater precision. This will eventually lower the risk for people and ecosystems to suffer from the toxic effects of such pollutants.

The event also celebrates the recent accreditation of the laboratory according to ISO/EN 17025:2017 which attests its compliance with international quality standards for laboratories. Georgia is the first country of the Eastern Partnership to achieve this outstanding result. The accreditation confirms that analytical results provided by the National Environmental Agency are comparable, consistent, and trustworthy, hence policy decisions can be taken based on solid scientific evidence. The availability of state-of-the-art laboratories is key for Georgia’s compliance with chemical water quality standards set by the EU Water Framework Directive.

During the Water Laboratory Day, young students from the Eastern Partnership European School in Tbilisi visit the new laboratory facilities, learn from experts about environmental analysis of water and rivers systems, and try water analysis together with laboratory staff.

A high-level panel informs the audience and media representatives on recent developments regarding water policy and integrated water management in Georgia, followed by a visit of the laboratory and opportunities for exchange between media representatives, students and panelists.

Over the last ten years, the European Union has provided significant technical and financial support to improve water policies to the benefit of people and the environment. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture has partnered with peers in the European Union through the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+). As part of its commitments under the Association Agreement, Georgia is aligning its national policies and strategies with the EU Water Framework Directive. The recent upgrade of the laboratory is a major step towards integrated management of water resources, and support Georgia in its process of approximation to the EU Water Framework Directive. In 2020, two river basin management plans will be the main project outputs.

Keynote speakers:

- Mr. Levan Davitashvili – Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- H.E. Mr. Carl Hartzell - Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia
- H.E. Mr. Arad Benkö – Ambassador of Austria to Georgia
- Mr. Andro Aslanishvili – Head of National Environment Agency of Georgia
- Mr. Alexander Zinke – EUWI+ project leader of the EU Member State Consortium

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