



Press Release

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

Baku, Azerbaijan, 4 December 2019 - On Tuesday 10 December, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan and the European Union will celebrate the opening of the newly renovated Laboratory Centre of the National Environmental Monitoring Department in Baku in a festive ceremony 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 technological upgrade and renovation of the Laboratory Centre, the National Environmental Monitoring Department now conducts state-of-the-art water analysis which advance the protection of water and river basins in Azerbaijan. 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.

During the Water Laboratory Opening, a high-level panel will inform the audience and media representatives on recent developments regarding water policy and integrated water management in Azerbaijan. Following the statements delivered by the high-level panel, the Minister and distinguished guests will officially open the renovated laboratory in a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by a visit of the laboratory and opportunities for exchange between media representatives and panelists.

In parallel, students from the National University will visit the new laboratory facilities and conduct environmental analysis of Kura river water together with laboratory staff.

Keynote speakers:

- Mr. Mukhtar Babayev - Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan
- Mr Kestutis Jankauskas - Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan (tbc)
- H.E. Mr. Alexander Bayerl - Ambassador of Austria to Azerbaijan (tbc)
- H.E. Mr. Zacharie Gross - Ambassador of France to Azerbaijan (tbc)
- Mr. Alexander Zinke - EUWI+ project leader of the EU Member State Consortium.

Background info: Launched in September 2016 for a duration of four years, the [European Union Water Initiative plus for the Eastern Partnership programme \(EUWI+\)](#) is one of the biggest policy dialogue and technical support commitments of the European Union to the water sector in the Eastern Partner countries. The programme supports the six partner countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) to align their legislation with European Union's policy on water management, with a focus on transboundary rivers. The project is funded by the European Union (EUR 23.5 million) and implemented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and an EU member states consortium comprising the Austrian Environment Agency (Austria) and the International Office for Water (France). The recent upgrade of the laboratory is a major step towards integrated management of water resources, and support Azerbaijan in its process of approximation to the EU Water Framework Directive. In 2020, one river basin management plan will be the main project outputs.

For more information, please contact Mr. Rafiq Verdiyev at rafig.verdiyev@euwipluseast.eu