



PRESS RELEASE

Reviewing 5 years of European Union support to the water sector in the Eastern Partnership countries: EU Water Initiative + Regional Steering Committee Meeting

Paris, 06 July 2021. Today's environmental trends call for an urgent transformation in how we manage our water resources. We also need to keep investing in water, as insufficient water and sanitation generates substantial economic costs that are only going to increase with climate change. Over the last five years, the European Union Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) programme has supported the six Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – to adopt and implement a systemic approach to water management.

This regional Steering Committee Meeting presented progress and acknowledge results achieved under EU Water Initiative + since 2016 with regard to modernising national water policy, strengthening water management capacities, enhancing transboundary cooperation and achieving benefits for the environment and the citizens of Eastern Partnership countries. The meeting also discussed next steps towards ensuring sustainability of EUWI+ results and reflect on future priorities in the water sector of EaP countries.

The EUWI+ implementing partners and EaP country delegations presented the main achievements and lessons learned of EUWI+ since 2016 and considered emerging water sector priorities. Representatives from civil society, development partners and EU-funded projects active in the EaP countries commented on experiences with EUWI+. DG NEAR presented the ongoing and proposed future EU support on environmental matters, including water, in the Eastern Partnership.

Dr **Michael Rupp of DG NEAR** who chaired the meeting commented that *“The outputs delivered by the EU Water Initiative Plus, including legislative improvements, sound strategic planning, modern water monitoring and river basin planning will provide benefits for citizens of Eastern partner countries for years to come. National Policy Dialogues have demonstrated that water is a truly horizontal issue, touching all parts of the economy and many stakeholders. We look forward to future work which will scale up and accelerate our shared journey towards better water management. The European Union will continue to provide support for the benefit of people and the environment.”*

Background info

Launched in September 2016, the [European Union Water Initiative plus for the Eastern Partnership \(EUWI+\)](#) 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 (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) to align their legislation with European Union policy on water management, with a focus on transboundary rivers. The project is co-funded by the European Union (EUR 23.5 million) and Austria and France (EUR 1.0 million). It is 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 Environment Agency Austria (Austria) and the International Office for Water (France).

[Leaflet EUWI+ Top 10 successes](#)