



**European Union Water Initiative Plus
for the Eastern Partnership**



Minutes

**of 4th meeting of the Coordination Committee
of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management
in the Republic of Moldova**
(the 26th NPD meeting under the EUWI in Moldova)

15 June 2018

VisPas Hotel, Conference Room, 26, A. Lapusneanu Str., Chisinau

Objectives of the meeting: The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the implementation of work under the „European Union Water Initiative Plus” for the Eastern Partnership countries (EUWI+) project funded by the European Union. In particular the meeting aimed to inform the Committee and invited stakeholders about an update on recent changes in the institutional set up and developments in environmental and water policies and legislation in the Republic of Moldova, as well as to take stock of progress in implementing the EUWI+ project in Moldova and to get feedback from local stakeholders on interim results under activities implemented through the NPD. Furthermore the meeting aimed to serve as a platform for sharing and exchanging information of donor activities in the water sector in Moldova.

The agenda of the meeting of the Coordination Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management in the Republic of Moldova is attached to these minutes (Annex 1).

Participation:

About 70 persons participated in the 4th meeting of the Coordination Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management in the Republic of Moldova, representing the Committee members, Governmental organizations, EUWI+ East team, civil society (NGO's), expert community and consultants, international organizations and bilateral donors.

The List of participants is attached to these minutes (Annex 2).

Ms. Valentina Tapis, NPD CC Chair and State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment in the Republic of Moldova, chaired the 4th meeting of the Coordination Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management in Moldova. She welcomed the participants and expressed her appreciation that so many international and national stakeholders showed their on-going interest in this important project which is essential for the continuity of the policy dialogue process. Ms. Tapis mentioned that national and international stakeholders play an important role in the coordination of this process in order to ensure the fulfilment of Moldova's obligations according to the Association Agreement signed with European Union. She highlighted as well that the activities of the EUWI+ project in Moldova play a vital role in the coordination of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management in the Republic of Moldova. This Committee is an essential platform to discuss various issues related to promoting and implementing the state policy related to water resources management and development of the water supply and sanitation sector.

Ms. Tapis expressed a special welcome to Mr. Christian Ballaro, project manager on regional environment of the EU delegation for attending the meeting.

Mr. Antonio Castello, Senior Expert at the European Investment Bank (EIB), informed the meeting about the investments through the EIB and other donors such as the EBRD on different projects and in particular on water supply and sanitation in rural areas. General investments in the Republic of Moldova were up to 69 million Euros in 2018, of which 30 million Euros for water supply and sanitation projects in different areas. About 200.000 people have already benefit of the investments this year on the water and sanitation projects. Mr. Castello shared that several challenges on implementation of the projects were identified and he mentioned that the possibilities become limited to finance projects in these areas. He advised to carefully consider new activities and to set priorities before these activities really start, due to the limited financial resources of the country authorities at local and national level. That is why the assistance of donors is so important to have a robust funding of these activities.

Mr. Michael Sutter, representative of the project consortium of the Member States of the European Union provided background information on how the project started in Moldova and welcomed the progress that was identified with the implementation of the project. He mentioned that in comparison with other countries that are involved in this project, it can be said that Moldova is progressing well. He furthermore expressed that based on the current positive implementation results there is confidence that this project will be successful and he is looking forward to the results in the near future.

Discussions:

The 4th meeting of the Coordination Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on integrated water resources management in the Republic of Moldova was structured in 4 thematic sessions.

Session 1.

In this session, an update on recent changes in the institutional set up and developments in the environmental and water policies in Moldova was provided. Moldova has passed through a major reform of its government. This session took also stock of recent policy developments, as well information on the establishment of an Environmental Agency was provided.

Furthermore an update on the state of the legal framework in the Integrated Water Resources Management Policy Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE) in connection with the Commitments under Association Agreement) was provided.

Session 1 was completed by a presentation on the 'Management on the water resources based on the river basin districts. The presentation highlighted the establishment of two hydrographical basin

district committees, basin district committee “Dniestr” and basin district committee “Danube-Prut and Black Sea”.

Session 2.

In this session the Committee was informed about the progress in Implementing of the EUWI+ Work Plan for Moldova. In particular the Committee was informed that a study was completed on establishing a sound economic regulatory system for Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) in Moldova. As a result a good progress that was made in assisting the country in introducing new design and construction norms for small-scale WSS systems was presented. Also the work that was launched on drafting a mid-term action Plan to help to implement the national WSS Strategy for 2014-2018, and eventually update it, was presented.

The UNECE informed the Committee that it supported MARDE in the preparation of recent amendments to the Water Law No. 272 and in the initiation of the next cycle of amendments to be submitted to the Parliament in the fall of 2018. Furthermore information was provided on the launched preparatory work for the revision of the National Programme for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2025 and the implementation of some of its measures. UNECE also elaborated on its contribution to the preparatory stages of the establishment of the bilateral Moldovan-Ukrainian Dniester Commission as a feed into the GEF project.

This session will take stock of progress, discuss interim results and provide guidance for work in progress under Result 1.

Overview on the OECD-led activities in Moldova

In this session also a brief overview was given on the OECD-led activities in Moldova under the EUWI+ East project.

It was mentioned that the activities are carried out within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and other water-related EU Directives and international commitments, such as the Paris agreement, water-related SDGs and the applicable MEA. The activities in the Work Plan involve contribution to implementing national strategies, several EU Directives, MEAs & SDGs. Currently the drafting of a new mid-term Action Plan to support implementation of the national WSS Strategy is in progress. Further work is planned such as the development of new norms for design and construction of small-scale water supply systems (*temporary norms adopted, MoEI Ordinance of 04/04/18*). A report is finalized on strengthening the Economic Regulatory System for WSS. Work on economic instruments (tariffs, water use fees, compensation of damage to water resources and possibility of establishing a dedicated Water Fund is in progress and expected to be launched in H2 2018.

The overview focused further on Expected benefits for citizens of Moldova and the State, such as: Support to implementing WSS strategy, not least in rural areas, leads to a faster progress in implementing SDG 6.1 & 6.2 & priority improvements in WSS. The development and implementation of new norms are expected to result in much lower unit costs per person connected under new capital investments in rural WSS. It is expected to have a positive impact on tariffs; higher cost-effectiveness of interventions from the public budget and by donors. Work on ERS is expected to result in lower regulatory burden on, and improved financial health and sustainability of WSS operators.

The new mid-term Action plan integrated into broader policy (Moldova 2030 / NSSD) and budgetary frameworks (MTBF and annual budgets) are expected to result in higher coverage and better service quality; more resilient and a sustainable WSS. Within work on economic as benefits

were mentioned that right incentives are or will be introduced or strengthened. Finally the actions will lead as well to larger sources of finance for the water sector and (or) higher public revenues

Progress of UNECE activities and future plans

The representative of the UNECE presented the progress of UNECE activities and future plans. Current ongoing work focuses on supporting preparation of amendments to the Water Law no. 272 on protected areas (in line with Annex IV of WFD). Furthermore inputs have been provided as feed-in to the GEF project on the Dniester, e.g. preparatory meeting for the establishment of the bilateral Moldovan-Ukrainian Dniester Commission under the 2012 Dniester Treaty in Chisinau (5 April 2018). Other ongoing work is the preparatory work on the revision of the National Programme to implement the Protocol on Water and Health 2016-2025 and the implementation of some of its measures.

Future work will focus on providing support for drafting new round of amendments to the Water Law no. 272 to reflect developments since the adoption of the law and ongoing work related to different EU water-related Directives (June-November 2018). Based on decision of the NPD SC, a working group of experts on the revision of the National Programme will be established to implement the Protocol on Water and Health 2016-2025 and to start implementation of its Measure 18 (equitable access). This work will start in July 2018. Also ad-hoc support on legislative and institutional matters will be provided, based on request form MARDE. This must be seen as a continuous activity.

In this sessions were also presentations given on the following subjects:

- Presentation of interim results of the work on mid-term Action
- The on-going and planned work for the elaboration of amendments to the Water Law No. 272
- The progress under the National Programme for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2025, its planned revision and activities to implement some its measures
- Temporary new design and construction norms for small-scale WSS systems, approved by Ordinance of the Minister of Economy and Infrastructure (MoEI) of Moldova

Session 3.

In this session the meeting was informed about the progress in Implementing EUWI+ Work Plan for Moldova: results 2 and 3. The session took also stock of progress, discussed interim results and provided guidance for work in progress under Results 2 & 3, with special attention to:

River Basin Management Planning

Development of stakeholder participation mechanisms at different basins, scales and awareness rising as key for policy implementation, data sharing as base for knowledge development and integration were addressed in this session. In particular the progress and feedback on River Basin Management Planning for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) was presented and discussed. Furthermore special attention was given to stakeholder participation mechanisms at different basin scales and awareness rising as key for implementation. Finally 'Data Sharing' as base for knowledge development and integration was presented.

Strengthening of surface water and groundwater monitoring

The topic of strengthening of Surface Water and Groundwater Resources Monitoring Improving the Capacity of Water Monitoring Laboratories was presented. The Coordination Committee discussed

the topic and concluded that analyzing opportunities to enhance the capacities for Ground Water (GW) surveys and the analysis of GW samples should be taken forward.

Strengthening of RBM Planning including transboundary harmonization with direct application to the Danube-Prut and Black Sea river basin district.

In a presentation on this topic the needs to support the secretariats of the two basin district committees were explained and illustrated. Also the need for trainings for the staff of the committees was stressed. Furthermore the need for establishing a 'water cadaster' was highlighted as well as the need for the development of specialized software for the 'water balance'. A bilateral agreement with Romania could enhance the cooperation between both countries.

Session 4.

This session served as platform for identifying and (or) strengthening the synergies between various projects in the areas concerned, implemented in the Republic of Moldova with the support from the European Union, international financial organizations and bilateral donors (Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic). Presentations were given on the following subjects:

- "Strengthening the Institutional Framework in the Water and Sanitation Sector"
- *The project "Harmonization of national legislation with Directive 91 on urban waste water treatment"*
- *The Partnership of the Republic of Moldova with the Green Climate Fund in the context of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, funding opportunities for the water resources sector*
- Integrated Drought Management Programme in Central and Eastern Europe
- *Experience of an inter-municipalities governance model for WSS development in the Nirnova valley,*
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The participants of the meeting expressed their gratitude and addressed sincere thanks to the European Union, International Financing Institutions and bilateral donors for their continuous support in implementing the projects aimed at improving the management of water resources and development of water supply and sanitation systems in the Republic of Moldova.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

A. In the field of Planning and Improving the Legal Framework

1. It is recommended to the Experts who are drawing up the WSS Plan on the medium term:
 - to integrate initiatives to improve the legal framework and decision-making database, including reporting on existing water and sanitation systems.
 - to develop the general measures for the implementation of the Water and Health Protocol.
 - to coordinate the Regional Development Plans and Rural Development with Riverane River Basin Management Plans and other plans.
1. To submit a note to the CC of the DNP with recommendations for amendments to the WSS Strategy and Strategy Plan by mid-July 2018, to receive comments, suggestions for modifications by members of the CC and to all authorities and stakeholders.

2. It is recommended to organize a workshop in September-October 2018 on new norms in the field of design and construction of water supply and sanitation systems at small scale in collaboration with the Technical University of the Republic of Moldova.

The NPD Coordination Committee expressed appreciation of support provided by UNECE to revision of Water Law No 272 and request further assistance to develop next round of amendments in second half of 2018.

3. In the field of Basin Planing

The Coordination Committee recommends the adoption of the first generation Danube-Prut & Black Sea River Basin Management Plan without further delay in order to allow for EUWI+ support to the implementation of this plan within the remaining project period until end of 2020.

1. The Coordination Committee recommends to launch the preparation of the second generation Danube-Prut & Black Sea RBD for the 6-year period 2021-2027 as required in the WFD to develop a plan synchronized in time with Danube countries, in particular Romania.
2. The Coordination Committee recommends considering using the bi-lateral agreement with Romania to develop technical exchange for RBMP harmonization at the border and to explore opportunities to modernize the agreement.

B. In the field of Water and Health Protocol implementation in line with Sustainable Development Goals.

The CC of the NPD suggests to create a working group of experts to update the National Programme for implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health 2016-2025 and to guide implementation of its Measure No 18 on equitable access to water.

C. In the field of strengthening the capacities of monitoring laboratories and databases.

1. The Coordination Committee welcomes additional national financial resources for monitoring development within the EUWI+ project, which were made available from the National Environmental Fund of Moldova for the year 2018 and welcomes the outlook of potential additional financial resources in the coming years. The CC recommends to closely monitoring its development and requests information about its status in the coming NPD meetings.
2. The Coordination Committee recommends analyzing opportunities to enhance the capacities for Ground Water (GW) surveys and the analysis of GW samples.

The CC Secretary of DNP will deliver the minutes with the recommendations and conclusions mentioned for comments and proposals within 25 June 2018.

State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture,
Regional Development and Environment in the Republic of Moldova
NPD CC Chair

Ms. Valentina TAPIS

Vice Chair of the Coordination Committee

Serafima TRONZA

The minutes were drafted by Ms. Svetlana Stirbu
Local representative of the Result 1 of the EUWI+ Project in Moldova