



PROJECT INFORMATION

Status at project completion: October 2010

Workshop for the Effective Use of the Potential of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Authorities in the Countries of the EECCA region and the EU in the field of Environment and Water



Working group during the workshop in Bucharest
(Photo by WECF)

Background

The "Protocol on Water and Health" (PWH) is an instrument in the European region binding under international law that aims at protecting public health from water related diseases. An important principle of the PWH is unrestricted access of the public to environmental information and public participation in decision-making.

The public has the opportunity and the obligation to actively participate in policy making concerning important decisions and in accessing information needed. In this process, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are an important link between the public and authorities. The rights of the public can be put into practice by the NGOs through providing information and through lobby work. In many countries, cooperation between authorities, the public and NGOs hardly exists, especially in countries of the former Soviet Union. Thus, the opportunities of the PWH for the public and the NGOs are not yet effectively perceived and used.

Project

The workshop was held in Bucharest on 15 and 16 June 2010. Government representatives and NGOs from the EECCA region (Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) involved in the implementation of the PWH participated at the workshop. In total, 63 participants from 19 countries as well as from the institutions UNECE, WHO and EBRD took part and exchanged experiences regarding their approaches and methods in relation to access to information and public participation. This supported cooperation between authorities, the public and NGOs for the implementation of the PWH. Based on the workshop's results, a concept note about best practices in public participation was developed. The concept note is an official background paper for the "Meeting of the Parties" of the PWH on 23-25 November 2010 and serves as a basis for the discussion on the development of future public participation guidelines. The concept note is available online in English, Russian and French at:

http://www.unece.org/env/water/whmop2_documents.htm.

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- Project partners in Germany: Women in Europe for a Common Future, WECF e.V., www.wecf.eu
- Project partners on site: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva, www.unece.org; Ministry for Environment and Forestry, Romania, www.mmediu.ro; Global Water Partnership, Romania, www.gwpceeforum.org/?page=58