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EU4Green Recovery East

Recovery through a Circular Economy and Pollution Reduction in the Eastern Partnership countries

Author(s): OECD with inputs from all Implementing Partners

SUMMARY RECORD

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

Date	Venue	Time
8 July 2025	Virtual format via ZOOM	9:30 – 12:30 CEST 10:30-13:30 Kyiv, Chisinau 11:30 – 14:30 Yerevan

Participants

- Over 120 participants attended the virtual meeting. Participants included representatives from all EaP countries, representatives from EU institutions such as DG ENEST, DG Environment and EEA, implementing partner organisations, and representatives from international partner organisations including GIZ, OSCE, UNDP, and World Bank.

Main discussion points

- Key takeaways from the opening statements by Ms. Angela Bularga, DG ENEST, and Mr. Andrzej Januszewski, DG Environment, European Commission included:
 - Participants were welcomed to the meeting, which notes the end of a six-month inception phase of the new regional EU-funded programme to support the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in their efforts to make environmental policies and cooperation more effective and more supportive of countries' development goals.
 - DG ENEST and DG Environment recalled screening exercises carried out in Brussels in June/July for Ukraine and Moldova as part of the EU accession process and approximation within Chapter 27 of the EU acquis. For candidate countries, focus on implementation and enforcement will be a key aspect of success of this new EU-funded programme.
 - In relation to the component on water, outlined on the EU4Green Recovery East programme, DG Environment noted the recently adopted EU Water Resilience Strategy, which includes the following key goals:
 - restore and protect the whole water cycle,

Implementing partners:





- build a water-smart economy,
 - tackle water consumption,
 - improve water efficiency (reducing leakages in pipes, and modernising infrastructure)
 - access to clean and affordable water for all.
- DG ENEST noted that a new “European Union's strategic approach to the Black Sea region¹” was adopted on 28 May 2025. The approach is structured under three pillars: 1) enhancing security, stability and resilience; 2) fostering sustainable growth and prosperity via a Connectivity Agenda linking Europe with Central Asia through the South Caucasus; and 3) promoting environmental protection, climate change resilience and preparedness, and civil protection. This new policy aims to consolidate all relevant EU instruments and strategies and mobilise investments in line with the EU Global Gateway Strategy and a Team Europe spirit. It will be implemented in synergy with the enlargement process and the EaP policy. It will also aim to maximise the potential for synergies through investments and reforms undertaken under the Ukraine Plan, the Growth Plan for the Republic of Moldova, the Resilience and Growth Package for Armenia, and investments in Azerbaijan, as well as overall in the region through the Global Gateway.

Key messages from the opening statements by Mrs. Olga Yukhymchuk, Deputy Minister on European Integration, MEPNR, Ukraine; Grigore Stratulat, State Secretary (Green Transition, Waste), Republic of Moldova; and Mrs. Lilit Ahrhamyan, Head of the Water Policy Department, MoE, Armenia:

- All three countries welcomed the EU4Green Recovery East programme as a continuation of the previous regional support (EU4Environment Green Economy and EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data) and expressed commitment to the implementation of the goals outlined in their respective workplans, despite various international geopolitical pressures and Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.
- Ukraine also called for a roadmap on coordination, support, and technical capacity to manage the work stated within their workplan, especially in relation to the work related to Chapter 27.
- Moldova: Following the recent Bilateral Screening Meetings on Chapter 27 held in Brussels, which covered more than 200 legal acts, Moldova has taken measures to strengthen national capacities for implementing the regulatory framework. Moldova also called on EU4Green Recovery East implementing partners for support in implementing the transposition of several priority Regulations, which were already considered in Moldova workplan, such as the Regulation on European environmental economic accounts, the Regulation on packaging and packaging waste, the Regulation on own resource based on

¹ JOIN(2025) 135 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025JC0135>



- non-recycled plastic packaging waste, among others. Moldova also called for the involvement of academia and business representatives in communication and visibility activities to boost knowledge and the integration of tangible solutions for circular economy value chains in the country.
- Armenia: Through the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU, Armenia highlighted its significant and ambitious commitments and environmental long-term objectives to achieve a green economy and sustainable development. These include air quality, water quality, and resource management, including flood risk management, water scarcity and droughts, waste management, industrial pollution and industrial hazards, as well as the management of chemical substances. Armenia considers the flexible approach of its work plan an asset, as it will enable consideration of recent developments in the country and its respective priorities.
 - Key messages from the opening statements by Mr. Gerhard Pulfer, Programme Lead for EU4Green Recovery East, UBA:
 - The programme aims to support an environmentally and climate resilient development of the EaP countries; and implementing partners will provide support until December 2028, based on the workplans, covering 5 areas of work: 1) Circular economy, 2) Pollution reduction, with a focus on water as a critical resource, 3) Legislative alignment with the EU acquis and the European Green Deal to support the EU accession process, particularly for Ukraine and Moldova, and to support CEPA implementation for Armenia, 4) Integration into EU-wide environmental cooperation, particularly in terms of data reporting and data exchange, and 5) Transboundary regional environment cooperation (e.g. UNECE MEAs, including the Water Convention).
 - Over the past 6 months, the country workplans were developed, and responses to several ad-hoc requests were carried out such as trainings, proficiency tests for water labs, support to the water cadastre in Armenia, a Prut expert group meeting, and the intense support to the Chapter 27 mock-up screenings in Ukraine. The work plans presented are the result of a months-long process of interaction and consultation with Ukraine, Moldova, and Armenia. A regional workplan has also been developed to include activities for support of the entire EaP region. Experts of Azerbaijan and Georgia are welcome to participate in the implementation of this regional workplan.

Conclusions/Agreements / Decisions

Following a [presentation on each thematic area](#), comments and feedback were received:

Component 1 - Circular economy:

Comments and suggestions provided by Ukraine post-deadline have been taken into account by UNIDO and UBA.

Component 2 - Water as a critical resource:

The OiEau will ensure to involve the health sector when addressing the implementation of the Drinking Water Directive within the country workplans to ensure that the



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governance concerning the organisation and sustainability of water monitoring is taken into account. UBA will also provide training and capacity-building support through wastewater monitoring for epidemiology to detect pathogens or other substances. Building on previous trainings, it can also provide training on data management and genome variants, upon request from countries.

Synergies for collaboration with the regional EU-funded project EU4Climate Resilience were identified, including National Policy Dialogues, Agriculture, and Team Europe initiatives.

The OiEau confirmed in response to the Armenia State Water Committee that it had received its request for a revision of its workplan to include sludge collection, management, and processing. In consultation with UNIDO, expert feedback will be provided and incorporated into the workplan.

Component 3 - Support to legal approximation and implementation:

UBA confirmed that the current country workplans contain the preliminary priorities, as identified as urgent or ad-hoc activities during the inception phase. It has also taken into account the priorities that might be covered by other EU projects to avoid duplication of efforts. Therefore, the remaining priorities have been added to the “wish list” from each country and will be considered. Further bilateral consultations with countries will continue to identify priorities for 2025-2026, as there is flexibility to include or replace the current preliminary list of identified priorities.

UBA further confirmed in response to Ukraine that it will provide drafting support for the waste management legislation. However, it further clarified that where drafting support will be provided, it cannot conduct compliance checks, and changes to the work plan will be made accordingly.

OiEau also clarified that a comprehensive timeline for all activities over the next four years has not yet been developed, but that one can be created based on the most urgent priorities for each country. Such a timeline can be revised regularly, as needed.

Component 4- Institutional integration in EU-wide environmental cooperation, data management and digitalisation:

Ukraine will collaborate with the European Environment Agency (EEA) as part of its accession process on air monitoring points and air quality index, and is already collaborating with Finland through the “UFAIR” project, integrating a Team Europe approach within the EU4Green Recovery East programme, and UBA will use the results to inform implementation of its activities. Ukraine will also contribute to data cooperation through its Industrial Emission Portal. However, due to limited capacity within the Ministry of Environment, data collection and regular reporting activities in Ukraine will require technical assistance, whether in the form of software or other IT support. UBA will mostly be able to assist countries in assessing in collecting data. The provision of technical tools will be limited to the RAVEN software for air quality monitoring..

Ukraine’s State Statistical Service also noted that it is developing its own data portal and adjusting its approach to statistical data to align it with European legislation and transferring the information to EUROSTAT.

Component 5 - Transboundary regional environment cooperation:

No comments or additional requests we made.





Communication and Visibility Strategy:

Moldova welcomed the strategy and would like to further collaborate by creating videos for website dissemination, local campaigns for academia and the business sector, as well as collaboration with local media.

The EaP Civil Society expressed interest in collaborating with the EU4Green Recovery East programme and asked to be included in programme events and activities. Identifying such opportunities will be explored bilaterally with UBA and OECD.

Next steps

N°	Task	Who	Deadline
1	Amendments to the Ukraine workplan for Components 1 and 3;	UNIDO, UBA	July 11 2025
2	Amendments to the Armenia workplan for Component 2;	OiEau, UNIDO	July 11, 2025
3	Bilateral consultations with Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova to update/modify priorities for 2025-26 under Component 3;	UBA	Q3/Q4 2025
4	Bilateral consultation with the EaP Civil Society to identify areas of collaboration;	UBA, OECD	Q3/Q4 2025
5	Follow-up with Azerbaijan on the interest of the country in collaborating with EU4GRE, based on its expressed interest in climate change adaptation in the water sector;	UBA, DG ENEST	Q3/Q4 2025
6	Planning for the Second Regional Assembly meeting;	OECD	Q1/Q2 2026





About the EU4Green Recovery East programme

The EU4Green Recovery East programme is a regional programme supporting the EU's Eastern Partnership countries on their path towards a greener, more resilient, and competitive economy.

With an EU-contribution of EUR 21.3 million (2025-2028), it builds on the results of a decade of EU support for better water management and green economy adoption and focuses on five key components: (1) promoting a circular economy, (2) ensuring water is managed as a critical resource, (3) advancing legal approximation with EU environmental legislation, (4) strengthening integration into EU-wide environmental cooperation and data exchange, and (5) fostering cross-border environmental cooperation.

The programme is implemented by five partners: Expertise France with the French International Office for Water (OiEau), OECD, UNECE, UNIDO, and the Environment Agency Austria (UBA), as the consortium coordinator.

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