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1. INTRODUCTION

European Union - Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)

The EU renewed the project "European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)" in October 2019 to run for three years. The project will continue strengthening the policy dialogue on sustainable development between the CA partner countries, and to facilitate their cooperation with the EU on environment and climate change. Specifically, the project efforts will be focused on improving and rationalising policies and enhancing the capacities of national ministries and government agencies working in the relevant fields.

The WECOOP project aims to enhance environment, climate change and water policies in Central Asia through **approximation to EU standards** and **to promote green investments** in relevant sectors with the aim of contributing to measurable reductions in man-made pollution, including CO₂ emissions.

Priority areas for consultations and cooperation include environmental governance, circular economy and sustainable consumption and production, climate change adaptation and mitigation and water resources management.

The WECOOP News Bulletin provides brief information on the recent developments in EU policies and legislation, as well as on new relevant reports and studies published by the European Environment Agency, OECD or other specialized agencies (UNECE, WHO, IEA). Special attention is given to the reduction of methane emissions, as well as to new WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs).

Detailed information on the WECOOP project is available at the project website <u>https://wecoop.eu</u>.

2. EU POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

2.1. NEW EU POLICIES

New European Bauhaus: new actions and funding to link sustainability to style and inclusion

On 15 September 2021, the European Commission has adopted a Communication setting out the concept of **the New European Bauhaus** which includes a number of policy actions and funding possibilities and aims at accelerating the transformation of various economic sectors, such as construction and textiles, in order to provide access to all citizens to goods that are circular and less carbon intensive.

The New European Bauhaus brings a cultural and creative dimension to the European Green Deal, aiming to demonstrate how sustainable innovation offers tangible, positive experiences in our daily life.

By creating bridges between different backgrounds, cutting across disciplines and building on participation at all levels, the New European Bauhaus inspires a movement to facilitate and steer the transformation of our societies along three inseparable values:

- 1. **sustainability**, from climate goals, to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity
- **2. aesthetics**, quality of experience and style, beyond functionality
- **3. inclusion**, from valorising diversity, to securing accessibility and affordability.

Four thematic axes will guide the implementation of this new initiative:

- 1. reconnecting with nature
- 2. regaining a sense of belonging
- 3. prioritising the places and people that need it most
- 4. fostering long-term, life-cycle and integrated thinking in the industrial ecosystem.

These key themes take inspiration from the views and experiences of thousands of citizens, professionals and organisations across the EU who joined the co-design of the initiative and the open conversation about rethinking the way we live together.

Moving forward, the New European Bauhaus movement will focus on three key interconnected transformations:

- 1. of places on the ground
- 2. of the environment that enables innovation
- 3. of our perspectives and way of thinking.

About EUR 85 million of funding from EU programmes will be directed to the New European Bauhaus projects in 2021-2022. Many other EU programmes will integrate the New European Bauhaus as an element of context or priority without a predefined dedicated budget.

The Commission will establish a New European Bauhaus Lab, a 'think and do tank' to co-create, prototype and test new tools, solutions and policy recommendations.

The Lab will continue the movement's collaborative spirit that brings together different walks of life and reaches out to society, industry and politics to connect people and find new ways of creating together.

Links:

New European Bauhaus website:

<u>https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/delivery_en</u> Commission Communication on the New European Bauhaus (+ 3 annexes): <u>https://europa.eu/new-europeanbauhaus/delivery_en#ecl-inpage-717</u>

2.2. NEW EU LEGISLATION

Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1749 of 28 September 2021 on Energy Efficiency First: from principles to practice — Guidelines and examples for its implementation in decision-making in the energy sector and beyond C/2021/7014

Link (English): https://europa.eu/!9PQmKf

Member States are recommended to:

• Ensure that the energy efficiency first principle is applied in policy, planning and investment decisions at various decision-making levels, when energy demand or supply is affected. The principle needs to be applied in a proportional way depending on the context, objectives and impacts of the decision concerned.

• Treat the energy efficiency first principle as an overarching principle to be applied in a wider policy context, rather than an ultimate goal to reduce energy consumption. The principle shall be applied in conjunction and compliance with other policy objectives.

• Take a system approach when applying the energy efficiency first principle while paying attention to security of supply and the transition to climate neutrality. Assess cost-effectiveness and wider benefits of energy efficiency measures from a societal perspective when making strategic decisions, designing regulatory frameworks and planning future investment schemes.

• Ensure that the application of the energy efficiency first principle is verified by the relevant entities in those cases where policy, planning and investment decisions are subject to approval and monitoring requirements.

• Provide the framework conditions that enable the application of the principle and remove barriers to the energy efficiency first principle in all relevant policy areas and sectors. The application of the principle shall be accompanied by adequate incentives and measures addressing distributional impacts and ensuring that societal benefits are maximised.

• Provide information, guidance and assistance to relevant entities, in particular at local level, on how the energy efficiency first principle should be applied.

• Ensure sufficient resources are allocated for data collections, compilation of statistics and monitoring developments in energy efficiency. All statistics that relate to monitoring of the progress of energy efficiency shall be made public and available to all relevant entities with respect to principles of statistical confidentiality.

Definition: **'energy efficiency first principle**' means taking utmost account in energy planning, and in policy and investment decisions, of alternative cost-efficient energy efficiency measures to make energy demand and energy supply more efficient, in particular by means of cost-effective end-use energy savings, demand response initiatives and more efficient conversion, transmission and distribution of energy, whilst still achieving the objectives of those decisions.



3. REPORTS AND STUDIES

3.1. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EEA)

Drivers of and pressures arising from selected key water management challenges: A European overview. EEA Report No 9/2021.

This report aims to give a European overview of the main drivers and pressures that are at the core of key water management challenges and which put European water bodies most at risk of not achieving key environmental objectives. Identifying the pressures from and drivers of key water management challenges at the European level can help in prioritising the main issues that should be tackled with measures.

Link (English): <u>https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/</u> <u>drivers-of-and-pressures-arising</u>

3.2. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

Solutions and investments in the water-food-energyecosystems nexus: A synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins

The purpose of this publication is to support governments and other public and private actors in designing and implementing nexus solutions and investments that create synergies and provide transboundary benefits. Building on a wealth of accumulated experience, it offers policymakers and practitioners an overview of the problems that nexus solutions have helped tackle, crucial factors in their success and the main challenges encountered during implementation. It also presents lessons learned from regional dialogues that provide important insights into upscaling nexus solutions in transboundary contexts, with a focus on financing and enabling environments.

Link (English): <u>https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/</u> pub/360230

Funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development

This publication provides a comprehensive overview of the sources of funding and financing available to support transboundary water cooperation and activities related to the management and development of shared basins. It analyses the key opportunities and challenges related to their financing. It explores the different financial needs for the establishment and operation of joint bodies and for the elaboration and implementation of basin management and development projects. It also maps these needs with existing and potential sources of funding and financing, from both public and private entities.

Link (English): <u>https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/</u> pub/359843

Code of good practice for wood-burning and small combustion installations

Domestic wood heating is a major source of emissions of particulate matter, including black carbon (BC), and organic pollutants, such as dioxins/furans, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and benzo[a]pyrene (B(a)P), in the ECE region, resulting in poor local air quality conditions and significant negative effects on human health. The present document responds to the need to inform the general public of:

• available best practices for domestic wood heating in order to minimize emissions and increase efficiency, reducing expenditure due to decreased storage needs and the use of wood, while reducing the negative impact on the environment and human health

• the best heating devices currently available on the market

• the proper origin and characteristics of wood biomass and the need to burn dry, clean wood and thus to avoid use of composite, treated and/or contaminated wood.

Link (English): <u>https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/</u> pub/359346

Link (Russian): <u>https://unece.org/sites/default/</u> files/2021-10/wood_RU_web.pdf

3.3. ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

Fossil-Fuel Subsidies in the EU's Eastern Partner Countries: Estimates and Recent Policy Developments

Based on the OECD standard methodology, the study presents quantitative estimates of government support to consumers and producers of coal, oil and related petroleum products and natural gas, and electricity and heat generated from these fossil fuels. This report summarises the main findings of the analysis of fossil-fuel subsidy schemes in the six European Union's Eastern Partner (EaP) countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The study updates the 2018 Inventory of Energy Subsidies in the EU's Eastern Partnership Countries by providing data and estimates for 2016-2019. The analysis focuses on measuring two major types of fossil-fuel subsidies: direct transfers of funds to producers and consumers; and tax expenditure. This report also briefly discusses the taxation and energy pricing policies that have had direct or indirect impact on the evolution of fossil-fuel subsidies in the region. Detailed estimates of all individual support measures for each of the six countries are provided in Annexes to the report.

Link (English): <u>https://doi.org/10.1787/38d3a4b5-en</u> Link (Russian): <u>https://doi.org/10.1787/71fba21a-ru</u>

Accessing and Using Green Finance in the Kyrgyz Republic: Evidence from a Household Survey

This report presents findings from a survey on green finance conducted among 1 000 households in the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) in 2019. Although green finance is an emerging trend, knowledge about the appetite for green financial products and services in Kyrgyzstan is almost non-existent. The OECD prepared the household survey to close this gap in evidence. The research identified needs and demand from existing and potential clients of Kyrgyz financial institutions for financial instruments, including those that promote sustainable development. This will help commercial banks, policy makers and central bankers design more targeted interventions to increase access to and use of financial products and services, including green finance, in Kyrgyzstan.

Link: https://doi.org/10.1787/6233a44f-en

3.4 WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)

NEW WHO GLOBAL AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES (AQGS)

Newly recommended guideline values of ambient air quality:

Particulate matter (PM)

Fine particulate matter (PM_{2,5})

- 5 μg/m³ annual mean
- 15 µg/m³ 24-hour mean

Coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀)

- 15 μg/m³ annual mean
- 45 μg/m³ 24-hour mean

Ozone (O₃)

- 100 μg/m³, 8-hour daily maximum*
 60 μg/m³ 8 hour maan, pack soason*
- 60 μg/m³ 8-hour mean, peak season**

* 99th percentile, (i.e. 3-4 exceedance days per year)
** Peak season is defined as an average so daily maximum 8-hour mean O₃ concentration in the six consecutive months with the highest six-month running average O₃ concentration

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

- 10 μg/m³ annual mean
- 25 µg/m³ 24-hour mean

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂)

• 40 μg/m³ 24-hour mean

Link (English): <u>https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health</u> Link (Russian): <u>https://www.who.int/ru/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health</u>

3.5. INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

Methane Tracker 2021

Methane emissions are the second largest cause of global warming. While methane tends to receive less attention than carbon dioxide (CO_2), reducing methane emissions will be critical for avoiding the worst effects of climate change.

The energy sector – including oil, natural gas, coal and bioenergy – is one of the largest sources of methane emissions, but efforts to reduce them have often been held back by a lack of reliable data. That was why the IEA launched its Methane Tracker in 2019 in an effort to reconcile the various and often conflicting sources of data into a coherent set of estimates. This interactive online tool has quickly become a global reference. It focuses on emissions from oil and gas operations – the area with the greatest and most cost-effective potential for reducing methane emissions.

This 2021 update to the IEA Methane Tracker includes detailed estimates for 2020 that incorporate new data for oil and gas supply as well as the latest evidence from the scientific literature and measurement campaigns.

For the first time, this year's Methane Tracker incorporates data on large-scale methane leaks detected by satellite, thanks to a collaboration with Kayrros, an earth observation firm.

Link (English): <u>https://www.iea.org/reports/methane-tracker-2021</u>

Driving Down Methane Leaks from the Oil and Gas Industry: a regulatory roadmap and toolkit

Link (English): <u>https://www.iea.org/reports/driving-down-</u> methane-leaks-from-the-oil-and-gas-industry

4. CONTACTS

European Union

92 Avenue Reine Astrid 1310 La Hulpe, Belgium Phone: +32 2 655 22 30

Central Asia

Office 15, 5 Dostyk street Z05H9M1 Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan Phone: +7701 206 6760

> info@wecoop.eu www.wecoop.eu

> @wecoopproject

Authors of the photographs: Page 1 – Farkhat Kabdykairov Page 3 – Vladislav Ushakov

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