Regional Newsletter

SPRING 2015

TABLE OF CONTENT

2 . . . . Introduction by Bella Nestorova, Programme Manager, European Commission

FEATURE

3 . . . . Not in Our Forest

IN FOCUS

6 . . . . Oak Management Reviewed in Moldova
8 . . . . First Timber Traceability System in Moldova
9 . . . . Georgian Companies Choose FSC Paper
10 . . . . Law Enforcement Effective in Belarus
11 . . . . Forest Corruption Addressed in Ukraine
12 . . . . Action Needed to Counter Climate Change in Azerbaijan

13 . . . . Important Education Partnership in Moldova

EVENTS

14 . . . . National Programme Advisory Committee Meetings Across the Region
16 . . . . EU Day Celebrations continue throughout May
19 . . . . Youth Encouraged to Participate in Forestry Education in Azerbaijan
20 . . . . Sahaki and Gakh Districts Pioneer Sustainable Tourism in Azerbaijan
21 . . . . Ukrainians Study Good Hunting Practices Abroad

IN LOVING MEMORY

22 . . . . Gera Voskanyan

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content, findings, interpretations, and conclusions of this publication are the sole responsibility of the FLEG II (ENPI East) Programme Team (www.enpi-fleg.org) and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Implementing Organizations.
I am delighted to introduce the Spring 2015 edition of the ENPI FLEG II newsletter, which shares the latest project news with us at the European Union, with other donors, and with all project counterparts in the partner countries — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia.

As you read through the latest project developments, you will certainly notice the importance of working together — across institutions and across borders — to combat illegal logging and improve forest governance. In fact, both phases of the ENPI FLEG programme, which the European Union has financed since 2008, have supported the implementation of the common commitments taken at the European and Northern Asian Ministerial Declaration on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in 2005. Besides concrete national activities, which have helped for example to improve legislation on forest management and raise awareness on illegal logging, the project has also supported regional studies, trainings, and exchange of results.

At this advanced stage of the ENPI FLEG II implementation, I would like to highlight the importance to evaluate the progress made so far and also consider what can be done better in the future. If you have ideas about how to ensure proper follow-up of successful actions or replication in other countries, how to apply the lessons learned from the past implementation, and how to draw on the latest best practices internationally and in the EU Member states and institutions, please share them with the project management team or with us at the European Commission. Practical suggestions on how to develop further synergies with other EU-funded projects in the field of environment, such as Clima East Pilots, Emerald Network, and Shared Environmental Information Systems would also be very welcome. Let’s work together to maximize the impacts of our joint actions!

SEND YOUR VIEWS AND IDEAS TO:
bella.nestorova@ec.europa.eu
gminasyan@worldbank.org
cbucur@wwfdcp.ro
richard.aishton@iucn.org
Not in Our Forest

In Armenia, old-fashioned community engagement, modern satellite technology and a new website are exposing once secret illegal forest activities to the world.

Residents of Armenia’s forest communities have endured the negative effects of illegal logging and other activities for years. A new public forest monitoring effort is giving them the opportunity to push back. The programme, organized by FLEG II, has received significant support from Government forest managers and local communities.

To expose these illegal operations, FLEG II consultants compare satellite images of forest cover over time, to see where it is decreasing outside of legal harvest areas. They then send field teams to document the findings in the forest with GPS, photos and video. FLEG II experts then analyze the field data, and if the loss of forest cover is determined to be from illegal activities, they upload the information to the website (www.afpm.am) in both Armenian and English.

Involving Local Communities

The field teams are made up of local volunteers, who have been trained in identifying and documenting illegal forest activities and their impacts. Organizers have seen a substantial amount of public interest in participating and have trained 85 volunteers to date, nearly half women. There are currently seven volunteer public monitor teams in the programme.

▲ FLEG experts in Armenia compare satellite images of forest cover over time, like these from 2013 and 2014, to see where forest cover is decreasing outside of legal harvest areas. They then send field teams to verify the cause of the lost forest cover. Green on the map marks areas of no forest cover.
The programme’s website also encourages the public to submit observations of suspected illegal forest activities and natural changes to the forest like forest fires, landslides and erosion.

**Building Community-Government Cooperation**

The extent of forests makes it difficult for any agency to police the crimes. Armenia’s government forest agency, “Hayantar” SNCO, has supported the public forest monitoring project in Armenia as a way to help it identify illegal operations that may otherwise go undetected.

Hayantar worked with FLEG to identify legal logging locations and minimize false or misguided claims. Its support is the latest example of Hayantar’s increasing willingness to improve forest governance in Armenia.

---

**Costs of Illegal Logging**

According to a recent FLEG II study, in some forest villages in Armenia, the percentage of total household income derived from the forest is nearly equal to income derived from wages, but illegal logging is putting these resources at risk. Beyond the impacts from individual trees cut, illegal logging can exacerbate erosion and lead to →
dangerous landslides, especially in the mountains. Since the public monitoring programme began, every illegal logging site it has found has included trees cut on high-inclination slopes.

**GOING FORWARD**

“Just five years ago, this type of cooperation between a government agency, NGOs, and citizen watchdog groups was unthinkable”, said Luba Balyan, FLEG II Country Programme Coordinator in Armenia for the International Union for Conservation of Nature. “Now, everyone recognizes we must work together to solve a problem as large, complex and important as forest crime”.

“I am very much concerned about the uncontrolled and often illegal use of forests, especially when it is a large-scale logging of trees. With my personal involvement in this work, I wish to make my own contribution in reducing the illegal activities that occur in the forest”.

— Sargis Poghosyan
Engineer and member of local monitoring group in Ijevan, a regional hub the Tavush Region of Armenia

“This project is the most transparent way for us to learn about what is happening in the forest and receive independent information from forest monitoring”.

— Ruben Petrosyan
Chief Forester at Ministry of Agriculture, “Hayantar” SNCO

**LEARN MORE:**
Full story on
www.enpi-fleg.org/news/not-in-our-forest
or www.afpm.am

**CONTACT:**
Ms. Luba Balyan (IUCN)
luba.balyan@enpi-fleg.org
Beginning in April, the Moldova government’s forest management agency, Moldsilva, ceased main felling operations in 140 thousand hectares of oak forests, while it reviews ways to improve leasing and sustainable forest management.

The Agency’s new Director General made the decision to cease oak felling until the end of the year based on FLEG II supported research, new findings of wood from dubious sources, and other information that shows current forest management systems are not doing enough to prevent the loss of Moldovan forests’ biological and economic potential.

“Illegal logging is still a huge problem. We have recently found wood from inexplicable sources and detected insufficient operational management in many Moldsilva forest units across the country. All these create unfavourable conditions for sustainable management, and most critical is that forests are losing their biological potential and ability to provide the population with goods and products”.

— Iurie Apostolachi
Director General of Moldsilva

Moldsilva made the announcement on April 3, 2015 with FLEG II and the Moldova Forest Research and Management Institute at a joint press conference.
Mr. Valeriu Caisin, a true forest advocate and former FLEG consultant in the Cahul district of southern Moldova measures a veteran pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), a symbol of Moldova’s forests.

This decision is a continuation of the agency’s efforts since then to combat illegal logging and better manage Moldova’s forests. Throughout the process, Moldsilva has called on both FLEG I and FLEG II for expertise in a variety of areas, from technical expertise and research to communications and outreach. To further inform Moldsilva’s management efforts, FLEG II is now conducting three other studies on the topics of forest ecosystem services, forest and nature dependency among local communities and economic losses from unsustainable practices.

“We applaud Moldsilva’s effort to reduce the level of illegalities associated with forests and improve forest management, especially in the valuable portion of forests such as oak stands. We look forward to continuing to support those efforts”, said Aurel Lozan, FLEG II Country Programme Coordinator in Moldova.

**Quick Facts**

- In 2010, a FLEG analysis showed Moldova’s forest consumption was outpacing its forests’ ability to regenerate, largely due to illegal logging.
- The recent decision to cease oak main felling is a constitution of the agency’s efforts over the last five years to combat illegal logging and better manage Moldova’s forests.

**Learn More:**

**Contact:**
Mr. Aurel Lozan (IUCN, World Bank)
aurel.lozan@enpi-fleg.org
FLEG II Developed First Timber Traceability System for Moldova

LEG II experts developed a monitoring system of wood flow and supported law enforcement agencies to ensure the elimination of illegal activities, for Orhei Forestry Enterprise in Moldova. The system will improve wood traceability with the help of a software application that will help track the wood from the standing timber to the end use. With this app, the checks of the legality of the transported wood can be done in real time (on-line) by the law-enforcement bodies. It’s a big step forward towards conservation of natural resources and their improved management.

FLEG II presented the application to forest experts at the Moldova government’s forest management agency, Moldsilva. The experts agreed upon a few recommendations for the software application improvement. Vatici Forest Management Unit from Orhei Forestry Enterprise was selected as pilot-unit of a model area for initial development, implementation and testing of the wood traceability system and training of the foresters on its use. This monitoring system, when implemented for the entire national forest sector, will contribute to reducing illegal logging and combating tax evasion in the respective sector.

“The pilot area was chosen due to the existing human resources — young and open minded foresters. The traceability tool is successfully used in Romania so far but it took 7 years for its proper implementation”, said Mr. Costel Bucur, head of Forest and Protected Areas, WWF-DCP as well as FLEG II Programme Manager. “We do hope Moldova will move faster, and the pilot Forest Management Unit will demonstrate the usefulness of the tool and this will be replicated step by step till it reaches the county level”.

Quick Facts

- Most of the harvested wood in Moldova is fuel wood that goes directly to the households for their own use.
- However, there are some “business” people that offer to transport it and are facilitating the spread of illegal wood.
IN FOCUS

Georgian Companies Choose FSC-certified paper

LEG II surveyed more than 100 paper-consuming organizations and companies to determine their readiness to purchase FSC-certified paper, as well as to provide recommendations for its promotion and demonstrate the potential of implementing voluntary forest certification under FSC scheme in Georgia.

The survey also helped raise awareness about FSC-certified paper as it provided the respondents with information about it. The participants were asked if they agreed to be contacted regarding FSC-products.

The target entities were large organizations and companies operating in Georgia that are substantial consumers of paper products. These included domestic and international organizations, both public and private: supermarkets, banks, distributors, fast food restaurants, publishing houses, advertising companies, government agencies, and NGOs.

QUICK FACT

The FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) is an international organization involved in certifying forests that are managed in a sustainable way.

LEARN MORE:
www.enpi-fleg.org/docs/georgian-companies-choose-fsc-certified-paper

CONTACT:
Mr. Ilia Osephrasevili (WWF)
iosephrasevili@wwfcaucasus.org

Voices

“The next steps of FLEG II will involve cooperation with these interested companies to promote the purchase of certified paper”.

— Ilia Osephrasevili
FLEG II country coordinator for WWF Caucasus

The survey showed a low level of awareness about FSC. Without prompting, only 13 of the 102 organizations were aware of the FSC certification. However, the results indicate that there is substantial interest in promoting the consumption of FSC-certified paper in Georgia. Five companies participating in the survey are already using it, and other 64 companies expressed their willingness to purchase it.
Research Proves High Effectiveness of Law Enforcement on Timber Legality in Belarus

LEG II feasibility study assessed the need for additional measures to increase transparency of the timber tracking system in Belarus. If Belorussian timber exporting companies want to export to EU markets they must comply with requirements of the European Union Timber Regulations (EUTR). The research assessed the possible need for introducing an electronic system of marking each harvested log by a barcode in order to help companies comply with the EUTR.

The results of the research showed that the existing timber tracking system in Belarus is effective, especially when it comes to combating illegal logging. Additional measures to bar-code individual logs are not necessary and would not be effective economically.

After the presentation of the study results, the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus and FLEG II discussed which activities should be put in place instead of the electronic tracking system. It was agreed that FLEG II activities should be focused on developing clear instructions on how to apply new methods of withdrawal of timber cutting areas, forest taxation and on choosing the right type of logging considering the economic, ecological and social factors.

“Belarus forests are certified for compliance to national and international forest management standards and this provides additional assurance in timber harvesting legality”, said Nikolay Shmatkov, WWF-Russia’s Forest Programme Head as well as FLEG II Programme Country Coordinator.

Quick Facts

- The forest legislation is enforced by 13 thousands forest rangers in Belarus.
- More than a half of all forest of Belarus, 5.2 mln hectares, are FSC-certified.

Voices

“The existing timber market in Belarus is transparent for legal entities and for ordinary people, ensuring high timber legality and low volumes of illegal logging”.

— Dmitry Krasovsky
Vice-Head of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus

Learn More:

Contact:
Mr. Nikolay Shmatkov (WWF)
nshmatkov@wwf.ru
FLEG II Helps Foresters in Ukraine Address Corruption

Journalists from four regions of Ukraine learned about ways to prevent corruption in the forest sector thanks to the new practical guide published with the support of the FLEG II Programme.

“Preventing and Combatting Corruption in the Forest Sector in Ukraine: a Practical Guide” contains a detailed explanation of application of the provisions of anti-corruption legislation in the forest sector, as well as analysis of the existing gaps and fallacies, and has now been presented to the key local media in four cities (administrative centers) of Ukraine: Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, and Chernivtsi.

The presentation in Chernivtsi took place on March 16 and was one of the most successful in the series. It was attended by all 6 local TV channels and 15 journalists from print and electronic media.

The head of the local state forestry and hunting agency Anatoly Kovalskiy, who also attended the meeting, highly recommended the guide and stressed the importance of public participation in the efforts.

Recently, Ukraine adopted a new law (On the Principles of Anti-Corruption Enforcement) the perception of which has caused some confusion by law enforcement bodies and judicial agencies. This has adversely affected workers because there was an interpretation that foresters holding positions on a low level cannot be private entrepreneurs (outside of forestry sector). However, the law does not really impose such requirements.

The FLEG II Guide aims to explain this and many other aspects of anti-corruption laws to the law enforcement officials, and also to help foresters defend their rights.

QUICK FACTS

- The biggest corruption scandal in timber trade in Ukraine took place in 2012, when 14 timber companies and one furniture firm were found guilty of anti-competitive actions
- The anti-monopoly committee imposed a fine of 419 million Ukrainian Hryvna (almost 20 million US dollars) on the companies
- In 2013, some decision of the anti-monopoly committee were revoked by the court.

The FLEG II Programme gave the State Forest Agency of Ukraine 860 copies of the book. The Agency circulated the book among its regional forest offices, state enterprises and centers.
**FLEG II Report: Forest Climate Change Readiness in Azerbaijan**

The impacts of climate change on Azerbaijan’s forests and forest communities could be severe, and the country has much to do to prepare for it, according to a new FLEG II study.

While the results might seem daunting, having them puts Azerbaijan ahead of many other countries in efforts to combat climate change and prepare its forests and communities to adapt to its impacts.

The report shows that Azerbaijan’s forests are very vulnerable to climate change and the potential negative impacts will affect communities and economies that depend on forests. It also highlights Azerbaijan’s need for more resources, specialists and training to put in place forest-related adaptation measures. Forest fires, droughts and outbreaks of pests, diseases and invasive species will all be more frequent and intense as a result of climate change. Local communities will be forced to find new economic means and run the risk of increased unemployment and out-migration.

Azerbaijan has a lot of work to do to prepare its forests and forest communities for climate change. According to the report, stakeholders at both the local and national level have a poor understanding of the impacts to forests, how vulnerable they are and of existing climate change adaptation policies and programmes. They also lack the necessary technical and financial capacity to prepare for climate change.

“Even climbing the highest peaks begins with the first step”, said Azer Garayev, FLEG II country officer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). “This report gives Azerbaijani officials a solid understanding of the importance of addressing climate change in forest landscapes so they can make wise decisions when taking the necessary next steps”.

**QUICK FACTS**

- FLEG II worked closely with the European Union’s Clima East Project during this activity.
- Forests make up 11.8% of Azerbaijan’s total land area.
- In the past 200 years, Azerbaijan’s forest cover has reduced by half.
- The mean temperature in Azerbaijan rose three times faster from 1991 to 2000 than it did in the three decades before.

**LEARN MORE:**

**CONTACT:**
Mr. Azer Garayev (IUCN)
azer.garayev@enpi-fleg.org
In frames of FLEG II Programme two important partnership documents were signed on February 10, 2015, to foster the development of forestry education in Moldova Republic.

Partnership with the Ecology College in Chișinău will contribute to the development and publication of an educational material for teachers and students of pre-university level, on forest law enforcement and governance, as well as forest education of school students.

Another document representing the international collaboration of the Ecology College with the “Bucovina” Forestry High School from Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Romania, has been drawn up, in order to stimulate the exchange of best practices.

The forestry section of the Ecology College in Chișinău is a beneficiary of the FLEG II Programme, aiming to build capacity in an institution responsible for training the country’s future foresters.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Antoanela Costea (WWF)
acostea@wwfdcp.ro
Meetings of National Programme Advisory Committees Across the Region

National Programme Advisory Committee (NPAC) is an advisory and coordination body in each Participating Country of FLEG II. It consists of representatives of key stakeholder groups. It is chaired by the National FLEG focal point in each country. NPAC hold regular meetings to review Programme results in the country over the reporting period and approve a work plan for the next period.

NPAC IN RUSSIA

Russia’s NPAC reviewed progress over the past 6 months. Some of the results mentioned by the participants:

- A major FLEG II study implemented across the region determined that households in Russian forest villages get 30% of their income from forest. FLEG II supported activities to increase their profits and save the forests.
- FLEG II experts developed approaches on forest fire zoning; updated data on illegal logging; made a report about the condition of tree nurseries in Russia; and completed a wide array of other analyses.
- Another research assessed the knowledge of Russian forest companies on EU regulations aimed at combating illegal logging. FLEG II hopes that this research will help increase the quality of their implementation, and in the long term, eradicate illegal logging.
- FLEG II organized a series of trainings on sustainable forest use for several communities, developed “road maps” for sustainable forestry for two Russian villages in Khabarovsk region and helped introduce a sustainable forestry model in one district of Pskov region.

“The results of FLEG work implemented in the second half of 2014 have already proved useful in our work. The Government issued an order by which activities promoted by FLEG II, such as school forestry meetings, were included in the mandatory list of scheduled events”.

— Alexander Panfilov
FLEG National Focal Point and NPAC Chairman, Deputy Head of Federal Forestry Agency

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Mariya Vinokurova (World Bank)
vimaria@yandex.ru
**NPAC IN MOLDOVA**

The participants of the meeting confirmed that the governance of forests is being improved by the launch of the National Forestry Consultancy Office (NFCO), which aims at providing guidance and assistance to all forest owners and properties in order to improve forest management and promote sustainable development of natural resources.

The concept of an inter-communal forest or silvo-pastoral enterprise (ICFE) will be a new activity to be launched soon. IFE concept has a holistic approach to the use of resources at local level, such as forests and pastures (which are hardly managed), and sees their rational use extremely important for both human communities and ecosystems.

NPAC strongly supports the activity on evaluation of the economic loss from unsustainable forest use. Valuable information has been gathered on losses due to illegal logging, poaching and hunting. It is also anticipated that the new “Wood Traceability” system will reduce the level of illegalities.

Good cooperation has led to the improvement of communication within forestry sector, and public participation in decision-making. This has revitalized the positive image of forest personnel and enhanced transparency within Agency Moldsilva.

**NPAC IN UKRAINE**

Over 20 analytical studies, two published manuals and wide-scale practical implementation of FLEG II recommendations on the national level are some examples of the Programme work results in Ukraine that were presented at the NPAC meeting on May 6.

“FLEG II findings became the basis for the forestry development measures in the new Parliament’s Coalition Agreement, and now FLEG II findings are used by the Ministry of Agriculture to develop a unified integrated strategy for the development of agriculture and agricultural lands for 2015-2020 and other strategic documents”, said Ostap Yednak, member of Ukrainian Parliament and NPAC.

The NPAC approved the results report and the workplan for the next year, which includes, among other things, support to the Ukrainian government in developing the Action plan to combat illegal logging.

**LEARN MORE:**
www.enpi-fleg.org

**CONTACT:**
Mr. Aurel Lozan (World Bank, IUCN)
aurel.lozan@enpi-fleg.org

**LEARN MORE:**
www.enpi-fleg.org (English)
www.fleg.org.ua (Ukrainian)

**CONTACT:**
Mr. Oleg Lystopad (World Bank)
oleg.lystopad@enpi-fleg.org
The Europe Day is celebrated every year in the EU member and aspirant countries.

EUROPE DAY IN GEORGIA

The FLEG II programme participated in the open-air celebration of Europe Day in Tbilisi, Georgia, on May 10 to raise awareness of the importance of forest protection and FSC certification. FLEG II country team members gave presentations about the Programme, its achievements and future plans. Tbilisi Green School Children gave a performance about environmental problems and forest protection.

VOICES

“Today my friends and I understood that it is better to buy pencils, paper and wood with FSC logo programme. Now I know that with this choice I will help our forest and environment”.

— Irakli Kasradze
12 year-old schoolboy from Tbilisi Green School

QUICK FACTS

► Europe Day, held on 9 May every year, celebrates peace and unity in Europe.
► The date marks the anniversary of the historical ‘Schuman declaration’.
► At a speech in Paris in 1950, the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe.
► Local Offices of the European Commission, Parliament and EU Funded projects run events for all ages on May 9 and throughout May every year to celebrate these beginnings of the European Community, which is now EU.

CONTACT:
Ms. Nino Avsajanishvili (World Bank)
ni.avsajanishvili@gmail.com

LEARN MORE:
www.enpi-fleg.org
EUROPE DAY IN MOLDOVA

FLEG II in cooperation with local stakeholders and partners who benefited from EU assistance (Agency Moldsilva, Forest Research and Management Institute, Forest Enterprise and Nursery)

EVENTS

VOICES

“What impressed us at this event was the interest of people towards planting trees. Several families asked us for seedlings of oak and ash to start their own forest plantations”.

— Oleg Crivolap

Chief of the Telenesti Forest Nursery, a FLEG partner

A family from Chisinau surroundings is planning to grow their own forest, and received two seedlings (oak and ash) as a gift from Telenesti Forestry Nursery (seedlings bred and grown as part FLEG activity)

Telenesti, Antis-Media SRL, participated in the event, where preliminary results and products where presented to the public.

Forest Research and Management Institute presented its National Forestry Consultancy Office. It was recently launched within Moldsilva to assist and provide guidance to all forest owners and namely to those interested in establishing and managing new forestlands.

Forest Enterprise Telenesti, which helps strengthening capacities of locally-based forest nursery for the stimulation of energy forestry and improved management of local forest resources, exhibited seedlings of different tree species.

LEARN MORE:

www.enpi-fleg.org
(in English)

www.moldsilva.gov.md
(in Romanian)

CONTACT:

Mr. Aurel Lozan (World Bank, IUCN)
aurel.lozan@enpi-fleg.org
EUROPE DAY IN ARMENIA

The Forestry Quiz organized by the FLEG II Programme Coordination Team was very well received at an Information Fair that was held as part of EU Day celebrations in Armenia.

The public had to work to receive FLEG II prizes of promotional materials, which were only awarded to quiz participants who provided a set of correct answers. The idea was quite unusual for the passersby, however, in a very short time it triggered a huge interest towards the FLEG II stall and many people would just approach to participate in the quiz without “claiming” a prize or just chat about current state of the forestry sector or request more information on the Programme activities.

The implementing organizations for FLEG II World Bank, WWF and IUCN worked together and addressed these concerns and questions about the Programme and its implementation.

▲ This Armenian couple first just asked for notepads and postcards. When they learned that they have to earn prizes by taking part in the quiz, they got very excited, went through all the quiz questions, and wanted to know more about the goals of the Programme. Afterwards, new visitors came to the FLEG II tent and asked, “Is this the place where interesting questions are asked?”
Experts in Goranboy, Azerbaijan, discussed the possibility of launching new forest-related study programmes and increasing school-based young forestry regionally.

During a meeting in Dalimammadli village, which is home to a technical professional (vocational) school, forestry experts and scholars and the staff of the school discussed the need to launch forest-related study programmes nationwide. The Programme expects this school to pioneer the initiative, and the participants of the meeting considered existing technical and financial capabilities of the facility.

The future forestry programme was unanimously endorsed by all experts and will be based on FLEG II-supported "Bases of sustainable management of the Azerbaijani forests" tutorial. "The end goal is to make the youth more interested in pursuing career in the forest sector", said director of Goranboy EEPC Aytan Shamilova.

Another seminar with participation of major stakeholders in Goranboy District Education Department helped to find ways to increase school-based young forester movement regionally.

Both meetings were organized by the district Ecological Education and Practice Center (EEPC) and FLEG II.
FLEG II conducted meetings and discussions with the stakeholders in these regions, which revealed a huge potential for the development of sustainable recreation and tourism that was damaged by natural disasters.

In both districts, FLEG II consultants on sustainable recreation research, Zitta Hasanova and Liya Bayramova, met with the state forestry enterprises, local businesses and local communities.

As ancient, culturally diverse and naturally attractive places, Gakh and Shaki districts have a very high potential for the development of sustainable tourism, concluded the consultants.

Shaki and Gakh districts are some of the most beautiful regions in Azerbaijan. Located at the foot of the Greater Caucasus Mountains and full of ancient historic and natural monuments, they are destined to be the places of rest, joy and discovery. The famous Palace of Shaki khans, picturesque and ancient mosques and medieval bathes are standing next to the natural forests and rivers in Shaki. Gakh district has excellent locations for hunting and fishing. Surrounded by waterfalls and lakes, it is famous for its spa waters and little ancient villages located high in the mountains.

Challenges still remain for the forests. Illegal logging, illegal grazing, and unregulated tourism result in forest fires and ecosystem misbalance.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Ms. Zitta Hasanova (World Bank)
zitta.hasanova@enpi-fleg.org
FLEG II Helps Ukraine Study Good Hunting Management Practices Abroad

FLEG II supported a study tour to best practical game management areas in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary near the borderline of Ukraine to the EU.

Representatives from State Forest Resource Agency of Ukraine, Hunting and Fishing Magazine, FLEG II, a local NGO and the Institute of Ecology of Carpathians met with local hunters and experts from hunting organizations to discuss state hunting models and learn local experience in game management.

Developing clear strategy in game management helps to strengthen general forestry sector policy, improve biodiversity protection in forests, and take into account the full social, nature and economic value of forests.

Due to the political and economic impact of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement signed by Ukraine and EU, such knowledge is essential to build a hunting industry model in Ukraine that could be comparable to the EU and based on same values and approaches.

LEARN MORE:

CONTACT:
Mr. Bohdan Prots (WWF)
bprots@wwfdcp.org
Gera Voskanyan, age 35, passed away on Friday, March 20th 2015 in Gland, Switzerland during a business trip.

Gera was born on April 7th, 1979 in Armanvirth city, Armenia. He was a proud member of WWF-Armenia, which he joined in June 2011 as a Project Coordinator. Afterwards, in August 2012 he became the Partnership and Communications Manager.

Since then Gera has done a great job developing communications and establishing partnership with many organizations. Gera was the Regional Communication Coordinator for WWF on the FLEG II Programme covering seven countries. He was a key member of the Communication Team and had been working very successfully with his colleagues in Gland immediately before his death.

Gera’s contribution to FLEG II communications was immense, always finding new ways to help the people working to save the forests of Eastern Europe and Russia. He was also closely cooperating with representatives of mass media. His recent initiative has been organization of Earth Hour Global Movement in Armenia.

Gera adored children and that is why he organized many events for schoolchildren and initiated various charity activities in support of orphan children.

On a professional level, Gera was intelligent, enthusiastic, responsible, helpful and very friendly, and it was joyful to have him as part of our team. He was excited about and enjoying life and made others enjoy with his positive attitude, his constant questioning and curiosity. Gera kept us all looking to the future, always searching for the next challenge, always with a perfect sense of humour.

He was a great father, loving husband, a caring son and a true friend.

The FLEG II Communication Team, and everyone involved in the implementation of FLEG II, join his family, relatives and countless friends in mourning his passing.

We will always keep Gera in our memories.

TO MAKE A DONATION FOR GERA’S FAMILY, PLEASE CONTACT:
Mrs. Narine Mirakyan
Finance & Administration Manager, WWF Armenia
nmirakyan@wwfc Caucasus.org
About ENPI FLEG Program

The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) II European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) East Countries Programme supports participating countries’ forest governance. At the regional level, the Programme aims to implement the 2005 St. Petersburg FLEG Ministerial Declaration and support countries to commit to a time-bound action plan; at the national level the Programme will review or revise forest sector policies and legal and administrative structures; and improve knowledge of and support for sustainable forest management and good forest governance in the participating countries, and at the sub-national (local) level the Programme will test and demonstrate best practices for sustainable forest management and the feasibility of improved forest governance practices at the field-level on a pilot basis. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The Programme is funded by the European Union.

http://www.enpi-fleg.org

Project Partners

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
The European Union is the world’s largest donor of official development assistance. The European Commission’s Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) manages the bulk of the Union’s financial and technical assistance to the neighbourhood and enlargement countries. By implementing assistance actions in Europe’s eastern and southern neighbourhood, DG NEAR supports reform and democratic consolidation, and strengthens the prosperity, stability and security around Europe. DG NEAR helps to promote EU values, policies and interests in this region, and to contribute to developing the special relationship of the EU with its neighbouring countries.

http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

WORLD BANK
The World Bank Group is one of the world’s largest sources of knowledge and funding for its 188 member-countries. The organizations that make up the World Bank Group are owned by the governments of member nations, which have the ultimate decision-making power within the organizations on all matters, including policy, financial or membership issues. The World Bank Group comprises five closely associated institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA), which together form the World Bank; the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Each institution plays a distinct role in the World Bank Group’s mission to end extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than $1.25 a day to no more than 3 percent, and promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40 percent for every country. For additional information please visit:


IUCN
IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN’s work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental organisation, with more than 1,200 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN’s work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

www.iucn.org

WWF
WWF is one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

www.panda.org