

## The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)



The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is an inter-agency initiative of international organizations comprising UNEP, UNDP, the Organization for Security and cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). The ENVSEC partnership aims to reduce tensions and increase cooperation through the joint management of natural resources and environmental threats in Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

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### ENVSEC projects make Dniester River joint research, monitoring possible

As part of the ENVSEC initiative “Transboundary cooperation and sustainable management in the Dniester River Basin,” a new patrol boat and water sampling platform were provided to local Moldovan authorities in order to tackle fish poaching and address deteriorating water quality in the Dniester River. Fisheries inspectors from the Fisheries Service of the Ministry of Environment use the motorboat to protect the fish population and undertake needed conservation measures in coordination with their Ukrainian partners. Furthermore, the water sampling platform will enable joint sampling and analysis to be conducted by the Moldovan and Ukrainian health and environmental monitoring authorities

and will help facilitate better coordination and provision of quality drinking water in the region. The provision of equipment came at a critical time, with two new studies concluding that the number of fish species in the Dniester River Basin had declined by 50 per cent over the past 10 years and water quality indicators continued to deteriorate in the lower stretches of the river. Joint field research of fish fauna in the Lower Dniester also found a drop in commercial fish species, which was expected to have a direct economic impact on the lives of people depending on the river. The study on fish population advocates for joint conservation measures beginning from revising and expanding the lists of rare and endangered fish species living in the Dniester River. Both studies can be found at: [www.dniester.org](http://www.dniester.org) – a jointly managed site devoted to the cooperation between Moldova and Ukraine in improving sustainable management of the Dniester River basin.



A new patrol boat was provided to local Moldovan authorities to tackle fish poaching in the Dniester River

### Flood Monitoring System Progress Protects Against Floods in Belarus, Ukraine

A flood monitoring system of the Pripjat River Basin was recently expanded with the addition of a fourth automatic hydrometeorological station in Belarus. The stations collect data on water levels, temperature and precipitation. The data and hydrometeorological services from the monitoring system have been used by the water management board for flood protection measures, owners of water reservoirs, and by the administration of the Rivne nuclear power plant. The information from the stations has also aided fishery administrations to define the time of spawning and has been used by researchers studying climate change and hydrological regimes. The International Water Assessment Centre under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is also supporting activities for the flood monitoring system by training Ukrainian and Belarus experts in Slovakia. Additionally, the Centre plans to expand the data results to include water quality and radiation pollution, as well as extend the flood forecasting models.



Dr Alexei Iarochevitch, in Kiev, Ukraine, opens the first hydrometeorological station installed on the Pripjat River

### ENVSEC contributes to prevention of cross-border trafficking of environment-sensitive commodities

A kick-off meeting for the ENVSEC-funded project "Prevention of illegal cross-border transport of hazardous waste and other cross-border environmental crimes (Basel-III)" was held on 20 February 2012. Participants included customs, border and nature conservation authorities from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as

independent experts and representatives of international organizations. The meeting, which discussed how to further integrate the topic of preventing illegal transportation of waste, ozone-depleting substances, obsolete pesticides and rare and endangered living species into customs, border and environmental authorities training, proposed setting up a mobile group of trainers and developing a distance-learning course as well as producing publications and information in local languages on illegal cross-border trafficking of environment-sensitive commodities. As a multi-billion dollar business with relatively low sanctions, the international hazardous waste trade poses serious risks to human health and the environment.

### Sweden, ENVSEC join hands in Belarus activities

The Swedish International Development Agency and ENVSEC have agreed to work jointly on the environmental dimension of Sweden's new strategy for cooperation with the Republic of Belarus for the period 2012-2014. The project will address improved environmental management

and cross-border dialogue on mining and floods. It will also revisit the environmental safety of Belarus oil and gas pipelines, discuss the security dimensions of climate change in Belarus, and strengthen the role of mass media and the civil society in coping with environmental and security risks. The project will be implemented by the ENVSEC partners in cooperation with the Belarus Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection and the UNDP Country Office in Minsk.

## ENVSEC supports adaptation to climate change in Ukraine

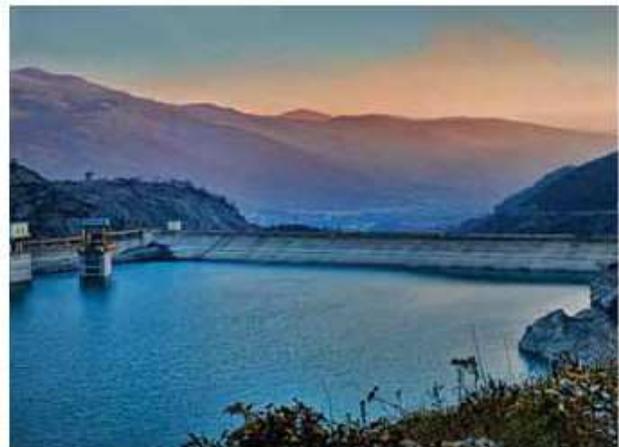
A study on adaptation to climate change in European Union countries and how these experiences could be implemented in Ukraine was discussed by experts and central government policy-makers in Kiev on 28 February 2012. The seminar was part of an ENVSEC project implemented in cooperation with the Organization

for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office. Participants discussed EU countries' experiences in developing methodologies, adaptation strategies and practices at the national, regional and local levels to address climate change. The seminar was organized as a follow-up to the project "Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE region," which considered several food security scenarios in Eastern Europe and developed recommendations on how to address risks stemming from climate change.

## Draft agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia on water

A draft water agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia was submitted to both governments, concluding a project that laid the ground work for the sustainable use of water in the Kura River Basin. The ENVSEC project "Transboundary water convention and bilateral agreement on shared water resources between Azerbaijan and Georgia" analyzed the legal and institutional needs for accession to, and implementation of, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention in Georgia. The project also assessed the costs associated with implementing the convention's requirements, which outline the sustainable management of transboundary waters. The draft agreement on the Kura River was formulated through four bilateral consultation meetings between Azerbaijan and Georgia. It provides a framework for cooperation between two countries on water pollution prevention and control, conservation of biodiversity, emergency situations, data and information sharing, and public participation. The agreement also outlines the potential establishment of a Joint Commission for protection and rational use of water resources of the Kura River Basin. Other considerations

detailed are cooperation in monitoring, information exchange and early warning systems. A final meeting was held in Georgia in February this year to clarify certain provisions. OSCE and the UNECE are considering developing an ENVSEC follow-up project if countries are ready to continue the bilateral consultation process.



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Dams, such as this one in Georgia, will be part of any future sustainable water management plan on the Kura River Basin

## Conflict prevention and support to water cooperation in Isfara River basin

A joint report on water management and priority transboundary activities was prepared by experts from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and presented at the Kyrgyz-Tajik inter-ministerial working group meeting on water issues. In addition, training on conflict prevention and water management was held in Batken, Kyrgyzstan jointly with partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, implementation of demonstration activities in the two Water User Associations (WUA) in the sub-basin of Isfara

River started in January 2012 and mobilization works were initiated to involve stakeholders. Training on "Experience of Introduction of Integrated Water Resource Management Elements and Transboundary Dialogue in the Sub-Basin of Isfara River" was held in Kayrakkum, Sughd Oblast of Tajikistan on 21-22 February 2012. Further project plans for 2012 include pilot-testing the guidelines on inventory of irrigation systems, and the development of alternatives to improve the water supply in the sub-basin of the Isfara River.

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