



5th MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE IN WATER SECTOR OF GEORGIA

11 April 2017

The 5th Steering Committee meeting of the National Policy Dialogue on water took place on 11 April 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Some 30 participants from key stakeholder organizations attended the high-level meeting to discuss challenges that Georgia faces in harmonizing its water policy and practice with relevant EU directives according to the Association Agreement signed in 2014 and entered into force in July 2016.

The National Policy Dialogue (NPD) process focuses on four major topics in Georgia: establishment of the legal framework for water management based on the EU Water Framework Directive principles; IWRM financing; setting up the targets for implementation of the UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health; and transboundary water cooperation activities in particular, preparing a transboundary water agreement with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

The meeting was chaired by deputy minister Ms Ekaterine Grigalava who expressed satisfaction with the further development of the NPD process in Georgia and stressed its vital role in ensuring proper coordination between national stakeholders and international projects for meeting the country's commitments under the Association Agreement with the EU.

Based on the Georgian national priorities, representatives of UNECE, OECD, Austria and France presented plans of the joint 2016-2020 "EU Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership" project (EUWI+). Besides the ongoing legal and institutional changes in the water sector, the provision of clean water and sanitation, the preparation of river basin management plans, measures for flood risk management, sustainable agriculture and the protection of the marine environment were discussed. Georgia does not generally face the problem of water scarcity, but access to water resources is uneven across its regions, investments in water infrastructure have been low and much of the existing water infrastructures are in disrepair.

Draft national workplan was in principle adopted by the meeting. The EUWI+ project will provide support to development of a long-term vision of water sector reforms. UNECE and OECD will assist Georgia in modernizing its water legislation, developing cooperation with neighbouring countries on transboundary rivers and updating national water and health targets. The project will also bring EU Member States experience and know-how to support WFD-compliant river basin management planning and water quality monitoring.

