

9 February 2022, Brussels

EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data” Programme Kick Off Speech by EaP CSF WG3 Coordination Ruslan Havryliuk

First of all, on behalf of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, I would like to thank for the invitation and the opportunity to participate in this important event.

I would also like to express special thanks to European partners for their long-term and strong support for the Eastern Partnership region, which is crucial for the transformation of our countries, especially for changing the established paradigm of using natural resources for economic development, where the forces of civil society are not always enough.

We are well aware that open environment information is an effective tool for environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

Probably that is why our countries still don't have European level monitoring networks including air, soil, water monitoring. We do not have modern monitoring stations for surface and groundwater, laboratories networks are beginning to come to life (with the support of the EU), we don't have free access to environment information, in many cases access to data remains paid.

A couple of words about water resources in the region.

In addition to being increasingly pressured by climate change, they are also suffering from relentless use and large-scale pollution.

We see excessive water use in energy, industry, agriculture, lack of treatment facilities in many cities, regulated rivers, degraded and destroyed river ecosystems. Water management needs to be strengthened. River basin councils (where they are created) remain institutionally weak.

In such conditions, civil society strongly supports the new EU initiative. Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and its National Platforms are ready to join the project. We look forward to such cooperation at the level of each country and region as a whole.

Reacting to the first information about the project, I want to note some components that we propose to include in the project:

- introduction of open access to existing databases for monitoring of surface and groundwater, air, soil, etc. by introducing APIs to these databases and entering them into a single register of open environmental databases;
- conducting regular inventory of major polluting enterprises of surface water, soil and air, introduction of systems for monitoring their impact on the environment;
- mapping of ecosystems and their services using satellite data, dissemination of Copernicus data to the Eastern Partnership countries;
- integration of open national monitoring data with European networks sort of GEOSS, Copernicus, etc.;
- support for citizen environmental monitoring projects (including air and water monitoring);



- promotion of cross-border cooperation in the management of transboundary river basins, dissemination of experience of Ukrainian-Moldovan cooperation in the Dniester river basin in other countries and in other basins;
- introduction of the best methods of water resources management, especially for groundwater;
- creation of a roadmap for the renovation of municipal wastewater treatment systems;
- introduction of assessment river basin ecosystem services and their integration into river basin management plans.