

OGI Update No.4 April 28, 1998

The information bulletin of Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva"(OGI) International
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SOFIA+3 Project: NGOs workshops

On 2nd of April, 1998 in Minsk, Belarus took place a **workshop of Belarusian environmental NGOs**, the main idea was to evaluate the process of the development and implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) of Belarus. This meeting was organized and executed by the efforts of the Belarusian eco-NGOs Round Table in close cooperation with the NGO Coalition within the framework of the joint project Sofia+ 3 for NGOs of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and other NIS countries. This event happened also thanks to the support from ISAR. More than 40 representatives and experts from different environmental organizations all over Belarus, experts from Ukrainian NGO OGI International, representatives of the Ministry of Nature Resources and Environmental Protection.

DECLARATION

We, the participants of the NGO seminar on evaluation of the NEAP in Belarus and on the discussion of the perspectives of our common strategy and cooperation for the sustainable development and environmental protection,

- taking into account the decisions of the Rio 92, and the Agenda 21, and also the Rio+ 5 process

- following the recommendations for the CEE countries in the area of NEAPs development within the framework of the Pan-European process 'Environment for Europe',

- being aware of the necessity to improve and to stabilize environmental situation in Belarus,

DECLARE:

- Development and implementation of NEAPs - this is the process of active searching for the ways of solving prior environmental problems, mobilizing the resources of the governmental and non-governmental sectors, businesses and scientific circles, all the society, oriented on

solving the long-term tasks of transition towards the sustainable development;

- In Belarus there is in fact no NEAP has been developed yet, and the National Program of the Rational Nature Resources Use and Environmental Protection for the period of years 1996-2000 does not comply with all the requirements and criteria of NEAP. No new environmental priorities and questions of the change-over for the sustainable development are taken into account;
- Public was not involved as a party in the process of the National Program and NEAP development in Belarus;
- Development of NEAP and harmonizing it with the Local Agenda 21 with the wide involvement of the representatives from all interested parties is crucial. Possible ways of public participation in this process could be organizing round tables and public consultations during the process and on different stages of NEAP development, support and execution of environmental projects and programs. NGOs are always open for cooperation with governmental structures;
- The most actual ways of active public participation in the NEAP development should be:
creation of the Public environmental committee - possibly a registered national NGO, consisting of the
representatives from Belarusian environmental NGOs,
development of the alternative variant of NEAP (NGO point of view) and Local Agenda 21;

AND WE THINK IT IS NECESSARY:

- to announce our position and opinion on Belarusian NEAP process at the Conference of the European environmental NGOs in Aarhus;
- to forward the international and european environmental organizations and partners our request for their support in the development of alternative variant of NEAP for Belarus;
- to consider this seminar to be a step on the way of further preparation of the Ecoforum of Belarusian NGOs, aimed at the development of the common actions and strategy;
- to create the Regional Environmental Center (New REC - Belarus) for the consolidation of efforts and for the improvement of environmental NGOs activity on implementation of the ideas and principles of sustainable development in Belarus, and to ask for financial and expert support from international organizations to enable us implement this idea;

A copy of the present Resolution was forwarded to the Ministry of Nature

Resources and Environmental Protection, to the secretariat of the European ECO Forum on the preparation to the Aarhus conference (Denmark, June 1998) and to the meeting of environmental NGOs of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and other NIS countries within the framework of the Sofia+ 3 project in Kiev on 29 May - 1 June 1998, and also to other relevant European and international organizations. April 2nd, 1998, Minsk, Belarus.

National NEAP NGO workshop for Ukraine (25-26 April 1998, Kyiv, Ukraine)

As a result of the national workshop it became possible to collect inputs from in-country Major Groups and

- to make more comprehensive independent evaluation of NEAP process in Ukraine
- to identify interested NGOs,
- to identify new ways and opportunities (applicable for another countries) for partnership between NGOs, Local Governments and Governments within NEAPs/LEAPs development and implementation in Ukraine
- to develop and adopt NGO recommendations to Government of Ukraine related to NEAPs/LEAPs.

Participants of the workshop:

NGOs, representatives from government, local authorities and international organizations and projects (ISAR, Tacis etc.)

Output of the workshop for Ukraine:

Structure of NEAP/LEAP for Ukraine proposed by NGOs

Proposed scheme of NGO involvement into making decision process within NEAPs development and implementation

Results of the workshop - Ukrainian - Russian

