**Seeking better economic well-being**

***Twenty six participants gathered for the last event of a series of five workshops on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) issues, which was held on 30 September – 1 October in Tbilisi, Georgia. The opening of the two day workshop was attended by Teimuraz Murgulia, Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, and Mr Stephen Stork, an official from European Delegation to Georgia. Six partner countries of the Air Quality Governance project were represented by specialists form government permitting departments and inspectorates dealing with industrial pollution, policy development and legal departments in charge of harmonization of national legislation of partner countries with the EU Environmental Acquis.***

Industrial production not only plays an important role in the economic well-being of the countries, but also has a significant impact on the environment. One of the main components of the Air Quality Governance project, which is due to terminate in the end of 2014, is the introduction of an integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) approach in the industrial sector. This component is dedicated to providing support towards the implementation of an integrated approach to permitting, as well as the implementation of Best Available Techniques (BAT) and best practices for selected industrial sectors.

The main objective of this workshop was to review progress in IPPC project activities.

A case study on recent experience of the Russian Federation amending national legal acts related to IPPC system was presented during one of the workshop sessions. Presentation focused on the main provisions and expected impact of newly adopted IPPC Law: introduction of the Best Available Techniques (BAT) principle, why is it needed, what expectations and fears it raises for different interested parties, and what economic incentives can be used to promote introduction of BAT. Project experts also discussed the development and perspectives of use of Russian reference documents on Best Available Techniques.

Representatives of project Partner Countries shared their experience, achievements and future plans in implementation of integrated pollution prevention and control. From presentations it was evident that countries have taken necessary steps to revise their relevant national legislation and planned further steps required to control industrial pollution. Lively round-table discussions on specific features of environmental permitting reform in the partner countries concluded first session of the workshop.

Second session of the first day was dedicated to the latest deliveries of the IPPC component. With an estimate of 50-70% of environmental impact in EU originating from small and medium enterprises (SMEs), presentation was focused on capacity building program for decision makers for small businesses regulation. The project expert made an overview of regulatory system of three countries, namely, Latvia, Check Republic and UK and discussed possible approaches based on each of the three systems. Recommendations for improvement of SMEs environmental performance aiming to reduce administrative burdens and related costs were elaborated during the session. In the end, the lecturer introduced a new initiative of the European Commission to promote resource efficiency improvements among SMEs and help them performing in green markets.

In this session, Russian experience on application of BAT approach through implementation of pilot projects in selected economic sectors, e.g. metal production, pulp and paper, oil processing, cement production, district heating, food and textile industry, was also presented.

Both group exercise and round table discussion added variety to this interesting and useful session of the workshop.

Coordination issue of internationally funded projects in the field of environmental permitting, specific legal and practical aspects of integrated environmental permitting, management requirements for permitting reform emphasising the most demanding tasks of implementation phase were also among topics elaborated during the last sessions of the workshop. Check experience in delivering inspections and analysis of a case study has evoked further discussions which continued on practical use of IPPC provisions and requirements.

To conclude with, it can be said that the review of progress in IPPC component activities encompassed comprehensive recommendations for reforming environmental permitting system in the Eastern ENPI developed by the project team and sharing best practices in regulating industrial production.

In the light of a completed series of the training sessions on this topic, the overall evaluation of the workshop by participants was very good. The evaluation concluded that programme objectives of the meeting were very clear, discussed topics were well selected. With good quality of presentations, very good contributions by participants as well as their active engagement in discussions, the seminar objectives have been fully achieved.