# Project Steering Committee meets in Chisinau

***On February 11th, 2014 the main conference room of the hotel “Codru” in Chisinau (Moldova) was filled with thirty six participants who attended the Steering Committee of the Air Quality Governance Project. The gathered participants represented the seven project partner countries, the European Commission and the project team. The annual meeting was convened to assess the 2013 core activities and to discuss further actions necessary to successfully finalise the project and ensure sustainability beyond 2014.***

The meeting was co-chaired by European Union representatives Ms. Bella NESTOROVA and Mr. Andre ZUBER and was divided into the following key sessions:

* Overview of the current EU air policy developments by DG Environment
* Project management reports on the major achievements to date
* Project Partner Countries assessment of the project progress
* Work in smaller groups on planning of project sustainability
* Reporting from the working groups and concluding discussions.

Prior to the meeting a press conference was held with participation of Mrs. Valentina **ŢAPIŞ, Vice Minister of Environment of Moldova, Mr. Henno PUTNIK, Project Manager from the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and Mr. Lubomyr MARKEVYCH, the project Team Leader.**

In the first part of the plenary session Mr. Andre Zuber gave a concise introduction of key EU air pollution statistics, new strategic objectives of the EU dealing with air pollution as well as the potential cost/benefits that are inherent in the new policy developments. His presentation was followed by the project manager Ms. Aïda Yassine who briefed the meeting participants about updates on the project team, the findings of results oriented monitoring carried out in 2013 and stressed the key challenges anticipated during the last year of the project.

The Team leader and the three key experts made condensed presentations of project achievements in 2013 and stressed the underlying project approach of helping countries set their national priorities at country and regional levels develop a regional network of specialists working in the air quality sector and stimulate ownership of the countries through country-driven activities.

After the project team concluded with their reports the partner countries provided their individual assessments of project progress and impact on their respective priorities.

Today’s tangible results may be noted in numerous capacity building initiatives implemented through various regional and sub-regional trainings on integrated pollution prevention and control, legislation and emissions inventory and study tours. In addition a significant number of thematic reports and studies were completed in select fields of air quality management. Assistance in developing the legal frameworks has resulted in a number of laws being drafted, including the draft Law on Ozone Protection in Ukraine, a draft Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and a package of regulations supporting the implementation of IPPC legislation in Azerbaijan and a draft Law on Atmospheric Air Pollution in Armenia. This was also noted in the national action plans for ratification and implementation of the selected CLRTAP protocols in Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In a separate development Moldova is now in the process of developing a broad strategy on air quality and a draft Law on Air Protection.

Selected pilot projects in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine have enabled the countries to better prepare for implementation of emission inventories and set emission limit values as well as to define priority pollutants for different economic activities and monitoring requirements. At the same time national pilot activities have commenced in Georgia where a feasibility study for the introduction of an EU compliant Air Quality Monitoring system will be prepared by the end of the third quarter this year.

In the road transportation sector, a higher level of proficiency in calculating transport emissions has been acquired by Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia with the introduction of COPERT software which specialises calculating air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions from road transport sources.

Lately, the project has been aiming to develop an outreach market for dissemination of project results and as a result communication actions have also been very active. National action plans which foresee the wider propagation of above achievements and dissemination through various social target groups and mass media have been developed in each partner country. In addition five timely editions of an electronic newsletter have been published and supplemented with a series of website articles on current project activities. Moreover, a web based information and knowledge exchange platform – Air-Q-Gov Forum was launched on the project’s website.

Concurrently with the project Steering Committee meeting, a number of interviews with EC and partner country representatives were filmed for the purpose of producing an information video. The video will aim to capture the efforts and achievements of the project to date and to raise public awareness about air quality air quality issues among a broader audience.

Seeking to ensure sustainability of the project results, the last working session was devoted to the preparation of proposals for future action. As the team leader noted – “Passion and commitment was exemplified during the breakout session as they elaborated recommendations for future action”. Refining the many proposals will lead to a specific set of recommendations that the project will pass on to the European Commission.

**Unfortunately the valuable discussions and proposals from the final session were followed by less than favourable weather conditions which caused many flight cancellations and offered the participants an opportunity to enjoy Moldovian hospitality a little longer.**

**In November 2014 members of the Steering Committee will meet one final time for a conference to wrap up project achievements and to finalize plans for the sustainability of project outputs.**