



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO UKRAINE
Operation Section 3

Line to take

- The EU is the major donor contributing to the alleviation on after effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe. The EU funds specifically targeted to Chernobyl affected areas, where exposure to radiation not only did adversely affect the health of the population, but also damage severely the mostly agriculture-based economy of the region. An integrated approach in line with international donors will contribute to enhance the rehabilitation of the living conditions in the area.
- This approach covers the public health sector, environment, economical development, dose measurements, and radiological protection. The actions are focusing on enhancing capacity of local communities to develop sustainable social and economic initiatives and to allocate resources efficiently; and of population to cope with the effects of contamination and development initiative for the most vulnerable categories.
- Co-operation for Rehabilitation of Living Conditions in Chernobyl Affected Areas in Belarus (CORE Programme) was created in 2003 with the total duration of 5 years as the complementary programme to the State Programme for the Minimisation of Consequences of the Chernobyl NPP Accident and Long-Term Rehabilitation of the Affected Areas ”.
- This programme has an objective to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of selected districts by reaching out to the people themselves, helping them to contribute to formulating specific individual and common project proposals.
- The European Commission, jointly with the other international Donors signed in 2003 the “Declaration of principles on CORE Programme.
- The CORE programme covered four regions: Bragin, Chechersk, Stolin and Slavgorod. In order to support the implementation of CORE Programme the European Commission allocated **€2 million**. (funds were available from NAP 2003 for Belarus). It has to be noted that the European Commission was the major contributor to the CORE Programme. In total **13 projects** have been selected to be implemented within this programme.
- However, significant delays with projects registration by the Belarus state authorities¹ have resulted in missing the contracting deadlines for seven out of the 13 selected projects. Due to this, the budget has been de-committed for the total amount of more than €1 million and the programme objectives were not fully achieved.
- In the framework of National Action Programme 2005 for Belarus, the European Commission allocated **€2.8 million** to maintained the approach towards the Rehabilitation of Chernobyl-affected areas and to support the initiative "Area Based development approach for the regions suffered from the Chernobyl disaster" launched by the UNDP, aimed at attracting higher attention to the social issues generated by the catastrophe and

¹ The registration by the Ministry of Economy of Belarus is the obligatory precondition before the start of the preparation and signature of a contract.

by economic transition in the affected areas. In total **61 initiatives** have been successfully implemented in the regions affected by the ChNPP disaster.

Further assistance

In spite of the actions already implemented by the EC the further assistance and co-operation is still necessary to help the regional and local stakeholders to promote the social and economic recovery of affected communities and address other needs, both those specific to Chernobyl and those affecting the general population.

In particular, there is a continuing need to deal with the following issues:

1. Economic decline: Destabilised income security due to limitations in industrial production and disrupted agricultural production (the main source of income for most population in the affected territories), and stigmatisation of products coming from the area, all these lead to lower wages, higher unemployment, rising poverty levels and dependency on (insufficient) social welfare handouts.
2. Poor health conditions: Continuing radiation exposure mostly through consumption of contaminated local produce has been linked to various health problems (in particular related to thyroid pathologies). A well-established increase in thyroid cancer diagnosed in children and adolescents possesses one of the major problems for health services.
3. Inadequate local infrastructure and distorted demographic structure: Years of underinvestment, partly caused by the high cost of cleaning up contaminated areas and social welfare as well as initial resettlement plans with regard to some of the most contaminated districts, have resulted in dilapidated basic infrastructure and services in health, education, water supply and sanitation.
4. Low awareness and culture of dependency: Many people still lack the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to live safely under the conditions of low-dose radiation exposure. Special attention should be paid to children from rural schools and rural population in general where the problem of radiation safety is very acute due to consumption of fruits of the forest and of food products grown on household land plots.