

WECF and network members attended the 4th meeting of the EUWI EECCA working group jointly with EAP Task Force by OECD in Bucharest 12 - 13 May 2008

The meeting brought together officials from EECCA water and environmental agencies, representatives from OECD environment and development cooperation ministries, experts in the areas of water supply and sanitation (WSS) and integrated water resource management (IWRM), as well as representatives of the NGO community and international organisations.

The objective of the meeting was to review progress in implementing the work programmes of the EUWI EECCA Working Group and of the EAP Task Force Group of Senior Officials for Water Sector Reform in EECCA and to engage into policy discussions in three important areas. The following issue was most relevant for WECF and their network organisations:

In most of the poorest EECCA countries, more than half of the population lives in rural areas, where access to safe water and basic sanitation can be as low as 20%. Due to a lack of data and the small size of individual village projects, providing support to these areas is often a challenge for governments and donors. The meeting looked into experience of how access to water supply and sanitation services in rural areas can be effectively improved. In the presentations by the EECCA countries, it became clear that their focus lies on access to water supply which in many countries is hardly affordable. Even the coverage of the running costs for water supply is often not affordable for people in rural areas. The treatment and safe disposal of the produced wastewater is rarely taken into consideration. In rural areas, the technical solutions for wastewater treatment were limited to septic tanks. It is however well known, that septic tanks are the main source for groundwater pollution, mentioned Claudia Wendland, policy coordinator sanitation, WECF. For Ukraine, an innovative sanitation system applying dry urine diverting toilets was presented by Anna Sviatkova, Mama 86, Ukraine, a network partner of WECF. The big advantage of this so called ecosan toilet system is that it can be implemented without water supply, without investment for sewerage and has an immediate positive impact on public health which could be demonstrated in the Ukrainian school.

Agenda and full report can be downloaded at the following website:

http://www.oecd.org/document/31/0,3343,en_2649_34291_40267295_1_1_1_1,00.html