

PROJECT INFORMATION

State as of April 2010

Round table about sustainable and decentralised wastewater treatment in rural areas of Bulgaria and Romania



Round Table in Grand Hotel Sofia (Photo: Dimitar Variyski)

Background

In Bulgaria, almost all inhabitants are served by centralised drinking water supply, but 98% of the villages do not have any adequate wastewater collection or treatment. In Romania, many people in rural areas rely on private wells for drinking water and pit latrines. The unsafe sanitation and wastewater system sets public health at risk and pollutes groundwater and surface waters. To meet the requirements of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive, the provision of sanitation and wastewater system also in rural areas is needed. In many regions of the EU, the construction of adequate sewage collection and treatment is unaffordable, particularly in small rural communities. There is a lack of financial, technical and staff resources, but also a lack of awareness among the society.

Project

On the 18th of March 2010, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) e.V. in coopera-

tion with the Bulgarian partner Earth Forever organised in the Grand Hotel Sofia a Round Table Dialogue for discussion and exchange about cost-effective and sustainable sanitation and wastewater solutions in Bulgarian and Romanian rural areas. With more than 90 participants, there has been a broad participation from all sectors (ministries, national and local authorities, consultants, business, universities, operators, NGOs) with support by international experts and the European Commission. After a set of presentations about policy, financing and technologies, a lively discussion in Bulgarian and English language with simultaneous translation took place. Awareness on the need for decentralised sanitation and wastewater treatment systems and their acceptance among the different stakeholders as well as the understanding of other involved has been raised. Obstacles to the implementation of such systems have been identified. Thus there is a need of pilot plants that successfully demonstrate decentral systems. The project contributed to creating an enabling framework for sustainable and decentralised solutions for wastewater treatment in rural areas.

- Funding: Advisory Assistance Programme of the German Federal Environment Ministry
- Project identification: 380 01 221
- Region: Bulgaria and Romania
- Duration: 11/2009 – 04/2010
- Project management: Umweltbundesamt
- Project partners in Germany: WECF, www.wecf.eu
- Local partner in Bulgaria: Earth Forever, www.earthforever.org