

# COUNTRY BRIEFING

## ON STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY | SLOVAK ENVIRONMENT AGENCY 2020



Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries (ENI SEIS II East)

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## Overall aim and specific objectives of the Country Briefing

The overall aim of the Country Briefing is to provide an overview of and make accessible state of environment information available at the country level.

More specifically, Country Briefing has three objectives:

- To provide interested parties with comparable, accurate and timely information on the environmental status in the six Eastern Partnership Countries of the ENI SEIS II East project that provides useful input into national environmental policy debates in international context.
- To demonstrate country performance and enable the user/reader to compare countries with other Eastern Partnership Countries.
- To share good experience in the field of environmental assessment, information and environmental protection.

## Methodological approach to the Country Briefing preparation

The methodological approach is based on the approach used in the preparation of The European environment state and outlook report 2015 (SOER 2015) – Part Countries and regions and is slightly modified in relation to the needs of the ENI SEIS II East project.

The Country Briefings are presented in interactive online versions at the website of the ENI SEIS II East project. Each Country Briefing contains separate sections to address the four main topics:

- **Main themes and sectors addressed in the national State of Environment report**

The purpose of this part is to provide an introduction to the national SOER and understanding of its structure as well as the main topics that are addressed in the report. The text addresses the legal requirement and frequency of the national SOER, methodological basis and use of indicators, structure of the report, overview of main themes addressed in the report and provides links to additional underlying information (e.g. national indicator system, additional reports if relevant, etc.). Suggested length: up to 250 words.

- **Key findings of the State of Environment report/ Key finding of the state of the environment**

The purpose of this part is to provide brief overview of the state of the environment in the country. It provides a summary of the key messages as well as key findings within the topics addressed in the latest national SOE report. Up-to-date data and information from other relevant official sources are also used. Suggested length: up to 800 words.

- **Main policy responses to key environmental challenges and concerns**

The purpose of this part is to reflect on the state of the environment in the wider national context, focusing on the main challenges, environmental concerns and existing policies addressing these challenges/ concerns in the country. In this part there are also highlighted policy responses to improve the state of the environment. Suggested length: up to 500 words.

- **Country specific issues**

The purpose of this part is to provide an opportunity to highlight country specific issues addressed in the SOE report or in relevant adopted policies, including emerging issues and how countries are dealing with them and, innovative policies supporting long term transition towards a more sustainable society in the country. The aim is to help to identify interesting developments and innovative approaches that could be an interest for other Eastern Partnership Countries. This includes the environmental political agenda; green economy, forward looking information and scenarios, regional issues etc. The suggestions mentioned below are based on the discussions during the country visit. Suggested length: up to 500 words.

# Main themes and sectors addressed in the national State of Environment Report (SOER)

The SOER of the Republic of Belarus is published every four years by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection of the Republic of Belarus (Ministry) in accordance with the 2008 Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 734. The last report available in Russian was published in 2019<sup>(1)</sup>.

The content of the SOE Report consists of following chapters:

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Geographical position
- Natural conditions
- Population
- Environmental education
- Social and economic development
- Public health and the environment

## SECTION 2. ECOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- Air pollution and ozone depletion
- Climate change
- Water resources
- Biodiversity
- Land resources

## SECTION 3. ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN SEPARATE SECTORS OF NATIONAL ECONOMY

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Transport
- Industry and construction
- Waste management
- Forestry

## SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- State Environmental Policy
- Legislative aspects of environmental activities
- International cooperation in the field of environmental protection

## CONCLUSIONS

## LIST OF USED SOURCES

Annexes

<sup>1</sup> <http://minpriroda.gov.by/uploads/files/Natsionalnyj-doklad-o-sostojanii-okruzhajuschej-sredy-Respubliki-Belarus-2015-2018-gg..pdf>

Since 2010, Belarus uses a system of core environmental indicators. 31 indicators divided into 9 thematic groups are available on the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat) webpage. The statistical book Environmental protection in the Republic of Belarus is published annually and contains the data on the state of the environment, availability and use of natural resources, and environmental expenditure. It also presents climate change and green growth indicators, information on areas of radioactive contamination as a result of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant catastrophe. The environmental indicators from the National list of Sustainable Development Goals indicators are published as well<sup>(2)</sup>.

## Key findings of the State of Environment report

In 2015-2018 the **ecological situation** in the Republic of Belarus was characterized by the stability of the environment. The effectiveness of the environmental protection measures has significantly increased, which ensured the sustainable positive tendency in environmental protection in relation to the controlled pollution parameters.

The total land **area** of the country is 20 760.0 thousand ha, including 8 460.1 thousand ha of agricultural land, of which 5 712.3 thousand ha of arable land.

For the period 2015–2018 there was a reduction in **emissions** from both stationary (to a lesser extent) and mobile sources of emissions. In general, the total reduction in emissions by country amounted to 8.1%, while from stationary sources by 2.1%, from mobile sources by 11.2%. The air quality monitoring results indicate that the problematic pollutants in the air of certain urban areas are PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, formaldehyde and ground-level ozone.

**Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** (total, without land use, land-use change and forestry – LULUCF), decreased by 32.51% when the years 2017 and 1990 are compared. GHG emissions increased from 81.2 million tons in 2000 to 94 million tons in 2017. Year-on-year emissions recorded an increase of 2.6%.

The 2018 year took 4<sup>th</sup> place in the ranked series of observations (from the warmest to the coldest) since 1945 - as the warmest year. The **average air temperature** in the Republic of Belarus for 2018 accounted for + 7.9° C, which is 1.2° C higher than the climatic norm of 1981-2010, and higher than the value of 2017 by 0.3° C.

The **river flow** in Belarus in 2018 amounted to 55.0 km<sup>3</sup>.

In 2018, the volume of **water abstraction** decreased by 57.5 million m<sup>3</sup> (3.9%) compared to 2015 and amounted to 1 390 million m<sup>3</sup>, of which: abstraction from surface water bodies was 581 million m<sup>3</sup> and from groundwater bodies was 809 million m<sup>3</sup>.

The main component in the structure of **water use** is the use of water for domestic and drinking needs. In 2018, this indicator amounted to 489.1 million m<sup>3</sup>, which is 0.6% less compared to 2017.

The volume of total **wastewater discharges** decreased by 9,8% between 2005 and 2018.

The overall **water supply and wastewater service coverage** has shown steady growth over the last several years. In 2018, the share of households living in apartments/ houses connected to public water supply reached 95,5% and to a wastewater collecting system 93,9%.

Some sources of **drinking water supply** did not meet sanitary standards (high iron content in water in 2018).

As of 2018 the system of **specially protected natural territories** includes 1 289 sites, including 1 nature reserve, 4 national parks, 99 national reserves, 282 local reserves, 326 natural monuments of national and 577 local importance. The total area of specially protected natural territories in 2018 amounted to 1 861.7 thousand ha (8.9% of the total area of the country) and increased by 16.7% compared to 2010 and by 1.9% compared to 2015. Forest ecosystems have the largest share in the structure of protected areas.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/ofitsialnaya-statistika/macroeconomy-and-environment/okruzhayuschaya-sreda/>

From 2011 to 2018, the extinction of species of wild **animals** and wild **plants** in Belarus did not occur. 1.2% of all species of animals, plants, and fungi registered in the Republic of Belarus are included in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus.

In 2018, over 60.7 million tons of **industrial waste** was generated in the Republic of Belarus. The total amount of the solid municipal waste decreased by 3% when the years 2010 and 2018 are compared - almost 3.8 million tons of the **solid municipal waste** was generated in 2018. There was a positive trend in the use of industrial waste. The level of waste use in 2018 was 33.1%, which is 39.5% more than in 2015. The volume of accumulated waste at the facilities accounted for 1,205.41 million tons.

The **fertilizers** application to the agricultural land of Belarus in 2018 amounted to 121 kg per ha of agricultural land, which is lower than in previous years. The Republic of Belarus is one of the twenty most **energy**-dependent countries in the world. From 2015 to 2018, there is a trend towards an increase in energy intensity. In 2018 end-use electricity consumption increased by 4.3% compared to 2015. There has also been an increase in passenger turnover (2015-2018 by 7.1%). The largest increase has been observed for air **transport** - by 46.3%. The first place in terms of cargo transport is occupied by pipeline transport, followed by rail and road transport. Compared to 2015, the freight turnover increased by 10.2%.

## Main policy responses to key environmental challenges and concerns

The progress has been achieved in the integration of environmental aspects into sectoral legislation and strategic documents. However, the level of such integration is differentiated across sectors and there is scope for stronger integration of environmental requirements in sectoral legislation and planning.

In 2015, the Republic of Belarus, along with 193 states, approved the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and expressed strong support for its implementation by achieving all the SDGs.

**The National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus until 2030<sup>(3)</sup>** was approved in 2015. The Strategy reflects the three pillars of sustainable development by emphasizing the triad "human being – economy – environment".

**The 2011 Environmental Protection Strategy for the period until 2025<sup>(4)</sup>** was approved. The Strategy is to be implemented through the development and implementation of state strategies, programmes and action plans on specific environmental components, programmes and action plans in economic sectors, regional programmes and local environmental action plans (LEAPs).

The goals of the **Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in the period 2011–2020 (2010) as amended in 2015<sup>(5)</sup>** are to prevent a decrease in the numbers and diversity of species of wild animals, plants and ecosystems and restore rare and endangered species of wild animals and plants, their populations and genetic diversity, sustaining their numbers, which is necessary for their sustainable existence, and to use biological diversity in such a way and with such intensity as not to lead, in the longer term, to its depletion, and so to allow for conserving its ability to satisfy the economic, aesthetic and other needs of the present and future generations.

**The 2011 Water Strategy until 2020<sup>(6)</sup>** outlines the basic principles of the policy and identifies the key action areas for the protection and use of water resources in the country. The Strategy was formulated by taking into consideration the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and reflecting provisions of the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.economy.gov.by/uploads/files/NSUR2030/Natsionalnaja-strategija-ustojchivogo-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-Respubliki-Belarus-na-period-do-2030-goda.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new\\_url\\_1670219329-ru/](http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new_url_1670219329-ru/)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/3-sentjabrja-2015-goda-postanovleniem-sovetom-ministrov-respubliki-belarus-743-utverzhdzen-natsionalnyj-plan-1752/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new\\_url\\_1649710582-ru/](http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new_url_1649710582-ru/)

**The State Programme of Measures to Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change for 2013-2020<sup>(7)</sup>** (2013) includes measures for saving on fuel use and energy in energy sector, stabilizing GHG emissions by using resource saving techniques in energy-intensive sectors of economy, optimizing waste management, enhancing the absorption of GHGs.

**The Strategy for Reduction of Adverse Impacts of Transport on Atmospheric Air<sup>(8)</sup>** until 2020 was approved in 2013. Euro 5 standard for diesel and petrol is applied.

**The 2015 Strategy for Integrated Municipal Solid Waste Management in Minsk Oblast for 2015-2029<sup>(9)</sup>**, approved by the Minsk Oblast Council of Deputies, presents measures for improvements of municipal waste management for the period 2015–2029.

**National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity for 2016-2020** was approved in 2015<sup>(10)</sup>.

**The State Program „Environmental Protection and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources for 2016-2020<sup>(11)</sup>** (2016) has been developed in accordance with the main provisions of the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030. The State Program defines the goals, objectives and main directions of state policy in the field of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources, financial support and mechanisms for its implementation in accordance with the established target indicative indicators.

## Country specific issues

On 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the Decree No. 1061, which approved **the National Action Plan for the Development of the Green Economy in the Republic of Belarus<sup>(12)</sup>** (hereinafter - the National Plan).

The preparation of this document was carried out in 2016 by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Economy and a number of other authorities as a part of the implementation of the mechanisms and principles of the „green“ economy.

The National plan defines the criteria on the basis of which the assessment of the conformity of economic activity to the principles of the “green” economy will be carried out until 2020.

Belarus is the second country of the Commonwealth of Independent States after Kazakhstan, which approved such a document.

Currently, a number of related projects are being implemented in the country, such as:

**„Forestry Development of the Republic of Belarus“** implemented by means of the World Bank loan and the related grant provided by the Global Environment Facility.

**„Supporting the transition to a green economy in the Republic of Belarus“** funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. The project was launched in 2015.

**“Technical Assistance to Support the Development of Green Economy in Belarus”**. The project is under implementation by a Consortium led by Hulla &Co. Human Dynamics KG and is financing by the European Union.

The Republic of Belarus is a participant of the **„Greening Economies in the European Union’s Eastern Neighbourhood“** programme, implemented jointly by UNECE, OECD, UNEP and UNIDO.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.government.by/ru/solutions/2058>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new\\_url\\_2009876790-ru/](http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/new_url_2009876790-ru/)

<sup>9</sup> <http://ecopartnerstvo.by/ru/publications/otkhody/strategiya-po-otkhodam-dlya-minskoy-oblasti>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/by/by-nbsap-v2-p2-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/gosprog/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.economy.gov.by/uploads/files/1061r.pdf>