

**Increasing Juridical Knowledge on Ecological Protection of Caspian Sea among
Municipalities of Sumgait City
MEGII-AZ16-05**

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Grant Budget: USD 2,912

Objective of the Project:

To raise awareness of the Municipalities about the judicial regulations for the ecological protection of the Caspian Sea

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Background and Problem Statement

With the priority problems of ecology Caspian sea oscillation of sea level, reducing reserve of sturgeon and soiling water, oil extraction, industry, agriculture and municipal stocks.

At the present time lack of international- juridical basis, regulating the activity in the field of security of the environment, ensuring ecological security and holding bio-difference in Caspian region and as well as acting mechanisms on inter-branch coordination and functional regulation in these fields result with degradation of this exceptional ecosystem.

Solution of ecological problems of the region of Caspian Sea is not a task of only state of the region, but also of public. Securing of ecological rights of the population reflected in the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic and as well as other nature- protection laws in Azerbaijan Republic. Admitting ecological rights of citizen, Azerbaijan state made a step in the direction of founding juridical state and confirmed the intention to build it. Acknowledgement of rights will assist by involving citizens to the protection of the environment; stimulate the increase of self- consciousness of citizens, ecological consciousness and culture. Realization of the right for the favorable environment, other ecological rights proposes opportunity to request the citizens corresponding behavior from other subjects, first of all, state bodies. Participation of public has importance for the development and realization of the national plan of the activity on the protection of the environment of Caspian water area. International experience shows us how public of foreign states has, especially municipality, huge influence on making decisions with leaders of these states and big industrial enterprises for favor of ecological security of these states. Taking into consideration that, there was elections of municipality in Azerbaijan at the beginning of 2005 and new candidates were elected in many municipalities our society “Ziya” decided to attract attention of members of municipalities to the problems of Caspian Sea, and wholly the environment, to introduce them with ecological rights set in the legislation and opportunities to act for protection of ecology of Caspian Sea which is the main national property of our nation.

Goals and Objectives

- Sensitization of municipality members to the environmental issues of the Caspian Sea;

- Assist the municipalities on protection of ecology of Caspian sea to the commissions;
- Making linkages between municipalities on Caspian states on protection of ecology of Caspian sea;

Implemented Project activities

- Experts involved in this project prepared materials related to the Caspian Sea status (inclusive the legislative material, statistic data, materials of State Committee on Ecology, materials of National Implementation Plan on environment protection etc.)
- A modern normative-legal base and organizational structure was collected by the current system of control (monitoring) in Azerbaijan on pollution and management system of emission of pollutants to environment.
- The existing interstate legislation on the Caspian Sea: multilateral and bilateral agreements and status of their fulfillment were reviewed.
- The gaps and discrepancies in nature protection legislation of Azerbaijan Republic were revealed, the proposals on its harmonization on the base of international experience were prepared.
- The practice of application of international nature protection conventions was reviewed.
- The center on legal support of municipalities, established under financial aid of the Eurasia Foundation at “Ziya” Society, which has been providing free legal aid since Feb 2004 on environmental issues not just to municipalities, provided by this project, as well to other municipalities, desiring to get professional aid.
- The website of the Center on legal support of municipalities at Society “Ziya” www.belediyye-az.org was used by municipalities on the project.
- The seminars were arranged in municipalities of Sumgayit city and Sabunchi and Azizbeyov districts of Baku city. The seminars arranged gave an opportunity to increase the professionalism of employees of local governance in the case of better organization of activities of these bodies in the field of environment protection and ecological safety. Links and confiding relations with local bodies of governance were also arranged during the trip, which would allow the continuation of work of the Center after completion of the project. During the holding of seminars the Society met with difficulties that were expressed in non-professionalism of the personnel of municipalities, engaged in nature protecting matters and low salary, which does not allow attracting more qualified staff.
- The book “Local governance in Azerbaijan: practice on economic and legal bases”, prepared by “Ziya” society was distributed among municipality members at seminars, which will provide them with clear knowledge on mechanism of defense of rights and interests of municipalities in daily life, on management and planning of their own work etc.
- In connection with the fact that many municipality employees did not know their rights on environment protection, the Society “Ziya” instead of conduction of planned seminars on three municipalities, held additional seminars in Lankaran region and Garadakh district of Baku.
- Moreover our society has prepared projects to them for getting grants from various donors with purposes to render assistance on self financing in the area of environment protection among all municipalities in need.
- During the project trainers were trained, which may continue work with municipalities at the completion of project.

The duration of the project is extended to complete the few remaining activities.