

**PRESS RELEASE**

**By using biomass boilers in public institutions, the consumption of gas may be reduced by up to 20 million m3 of gas a year**

Biomass boilers in over 100 public institutions are being tested and prepared for the cold season and boiler operators trained by a team of experts contracted by the “Addressing the impacts of the energy crisis in the Republic of Moldova” programme funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova, in partnership with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

By the end of the year, 100 boilers will be checked. 69 boilers were detected as not functional or with various technical issues. Out of them, 51 have already been inspected and verified. The programme’s experts found that besides maintenance and operation, the main issues relate to the lack of a service agreement with a company that would be authorised to carry out the maintenance works before the cold season and the lack of the needed amount of solid biomass fuel contracted by the authority that owns the boiler. At the same time, there are public institutions that made budget allocations for energy resources, but these are used to purchase natural gas for heating and not biomass.

*“The entire solid biofuel infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova was created with the support of the European Union and of the Government of Japan. At present, biomass boilers in public institutions have an installed capacity of 70 MW and can replace the consumption of up to 20 million m3 of natural gas. Thus, spendings for natural gas of around $20 million could be avoided, money could stay in the country, with the local producers of biofuel,”* declared Constantin Borosan, State Secretary for Energy, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

At the same time, a series of trainings for biomass boiler operators working for public institutions started in October, at the Centre of Excellence in Construction. The first group, 20 people, graduated the training on 30 October. Until the end of the year, 100 operators are going to be trained via this Centre. Other 100 people, who have been previously trained or have the respective qualifications, will be trained across the country.

To protect biodiversity from illegal and misused forest biomass burnt for energy and ensure the quality of solid biofuels placed on the market, the programme will support the re-accreditation of the Laboratory for testing biofuel quality, regulation of market placement and quality verification. Investment is planned to be made in operator training centres, involving biomass boiler operators. For the European Union, accelerating the uptake of renewables and energy efficiency remain the best solution for energy security and climate ambitions.

*“Around 75 solid biofuel producers are registered in the Republic of Moldova, with an annual production capacity of around 30 thousand tons. In the current energy context, it is really important to ensure availability and quality of solid biofuel for consumers,”* noted Mihail Lupu, Component Manager, UNDP Moldova.

With a budget of €10 million, the “Addressing the impacts of the energy crisis in the Republic of Moldova” programme helps fight climate change by reducing the impact of the energy crisis and mitigating the burden of energy poverty.

**For more information, please contact Mihail Lupu, Component Manager, “Addressing the impacts of the energy crisis in the Republic of Moldova” programme at** **mihail.lupu@undp.org**

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