The Ministry of Energy of Georgia organized a successful one-day information session on the INOGATE programme

On 16 October 2007, the Ministry of Energy of Georgia held a one-day information session in Tbilisi on the enhanced energy cooperation between the EU, the Littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas and their neighbouring countries, which is being supported by the INOGATE Programme. The information event was organized by the Country Coordinator, Ms Nana Pirtskhelani, Deputy Head of International Relations and Investment Project Department of the Ministry of Energy, with the support of the INOGATE Technical Secretariat.

The information event was attended by more than 40 participants - representatives from the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Ministry, the European Commission’s Delegation to Georgia, the TACIS and Balkans/CARDS Monitoring programme, the Georgian National Energy Regulatory Commission, the Oil, Gas and Electricity companies in Georgia, the Energy Efficiency Centre and from other Georgian associations involved in the energy sector.

The event was opened by the Deputy Minister Mr. George Abdushelishvili, who underlined the importance of energy cooperation with the EU, as well as of the INOGATE programme and invited all participants to contribute to this event. He also noted that Georgia actively participates in the Baku Initiative and stressed Georgia’s great interest in expanding the collaboration with the EU in regard to all the pillars of this energy cooperation. He also emphasised Georgia’s great interest in improving the investment climate of the country, in view of attracting investments to realize a series of very important projects, i.e. the interconnection to the Odessa-Brody pipeline, the Trans-Caspian gas corridor, the gas interconnection pipeline Georgia-Azerbaijan and the construction of gas underground storages in Georgia.

The Country Coordinator of Georgia, Ms Nana Pirtskhelani, presented in detail a historical review from the Baku Conference to the Astana Ministerial Conference, the objectives of the Astana Declaration, the main topics of the agreed Energy Road Map and the priorities of Georgia in all the cooperation pillars (market convergence, safety & security, sustainable development and investments). She also outlined the actions taken or planned in Georgia to achieve the objectives set out in the Astana Declaration. Furthermore, she explained the roles of the stakeholders in this initiative (Ministry of Energy, Country Coordinator, Working Group Members, regulators, energy companies, energy agencies and international financial institutions).
Following this presentation, the participants raised their interest in the priorities of Georgia in achieving the objectives of the Astana Declaration, as well as in Georgia's priority investment projects.

INO Gates representative Mr. Kyriakos Morfis held a presentation on the INOGATE work programme, focusing on the following topics:

- INOGATE Programme - new context and main objectives
- Work Programme for 2007-2008 - activities performed and planned
- EU support to the partner countries for regional cooperation, policy and institutional reform, including ongoing and upcoming technical assistance projects
- Additional support provided through other programmes

The participants raised a number of questions regarding the details of upcoming technical assistance projects, information on how INOGATE can provide support in realizing investment projects and also regarding the market convergence process and the forthcoming 3rd Ministerial Conference. INOGATE representatives described the main steps and key issues of the market convergence process and how INOGATE can facilitate proposed investment projects through specific technical assistance projects (IFIs technical assistance fund for Eastern Europe and Caucasus, Rapid Response facility for Central Asia).

It was also explained how INOGATE monitors the measures taken by the partner countries in relation to the objectives set out in the Astana Declaration. The participants were informed that a Monitoring Report will be produced for submission to the Ministers before the 3rd Ministerial Conference.

The representatives of the Georgian Regulation Commission spoke about the training course that they attended in September 2007 in Kiev and the importance of this course, as well as about their interest in cooperating with the other regulators of the region and with the INOGATE Secretariat.

The representatives of the Ministry of Energy voiced their interest in the forthcoming technical assistance projects, as well as in the potential assistance for realizing priority investment projects in Georgia. All participants expressed their gratitude for the organization of this information session and proposed to hold similar events in the future to update the stakeholders on the activities of the INOGATE programme.

The INOGATE representatives provided the participants with relevant contact information, as well as with advice on where the participants could find and download additional information on the INOGATE website.

The Country Coordinator and the INOGATE representatives thanked all participants for their attendance and their active participation in this information event.