

Start of wastewater knowledge exchange in Kosovo

Kosovo, as one of the newest countries in Europe, is the poorest country of the Balkan. It is appointed as partner country of the European Union. This means that it should work towards meeting regulations and directions from the EU, like for water.

At this moment there is hardly no municipal wastewater treatment plants operating in Kosovo. The first plant is tendered and under construction and the in the planning, the largest cities in Kosovo will construct facilities in coming years. Some industries have their own treatment facilities but this is still the minority. There is no education or training in wastewater treatment in general.



With this background PUM started a plan to develop an education program in Kosovo and asked World Water Academy (WWA) to help with the start in Kosovo.

Network

Looking at the situation parallels can be drawn with the situation in the Netherlands from 40-50 years ago. There was an increasing need for more knowledge and skills in the wastewater treatment sector. One of the successes that time was a more structured knowledge and skills sharing and education. In Kosovo there is no network or education at all. While, in the Netherlands, but international as well, there are many networks in the wastewater sector to exchange knowledge and ideas, to stimulate cooperation and communication and to organize events to keep on increasing the wastewater treatment.

One of the aims of this seminar was to come to a first network for cooperation and knowledge exchange. After a presentation with examples of networks in the water sector and needs inventarisation with the participants, WWA presented a first advice. The main components are that the start should be based on engaged and enthusiastic professionals, preferably from various organizations (government: national and local, universities: students and teachers, Businesses/industry and water companies). The first coordination is centralized by one organization. The basis of the network is enthusiasm to organize something together to exchange ideas and knowledge.

Based on the proposed ideas, the group of participants wants to go further. They agreed to take action to:

1. Make a Newsletter for sharing information, best-practices: once per two months
2. Organize field trips for students (maybe also professionals/teachers): Practical work / exercises
3. Manage a database (agreed to be done by University of Mitrovica)
4. Involve the ministry to get a larger role (use this for public awareness purposes as well)
5. Evaluation after one year.

In coming period, PUM and World Water Academy will briefly support in the first phase of the set-up of the network.



Training Basics of Wastewater Treatment

Based on the developed trainings, PUM and WWA tailored the program and the material to the needs of the participants. Because of the various backgrounds of the participants, it became a training with bit more general basic of wastewater treatment.

During the training a field trip has been organized to the Bylmeti Cheese factory, a company that has its own wastewater treatment system. Not only the plant has been visited, but also laboratory equipment has been showed and demonstrated. This part was highly appreciated by the participants, as one stated: *“The best points of the course is the combination of lectures and exercises and visit to factory Bylmeti”*.

The press in Kosovo was interested in the project as well. During the field trip to Bylmeti the press was present with a writing and television team: see [link](#).

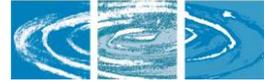


Seminar

One of the participants wrote in the evaluation: *“Well awareness is lacking in Kosovo, so this course can help to raise awareness. Visiting a small WWTP. Getting to know each other and meet people.”* Another participant stated: *“This type of seminar would be present more in our state. For me the best points of course is sharing ideas and information for wastewater treatment, and also know the importance of environment.”*

From 12-17 July, Johan Oost executed a capacity development project in Mitrovica, Kosovo, funded by RVO. This *Seminar Wastewater Management and Treatment* is the starting point of a new vocational education project of PUM. The program and a first training of *Basics of Wastewater Treatment* has been developed by World Water Academy and PUM. The aims of the seminar are:

- Training of experts, future teachers at universities and potential trainers for work field
- Creating a network for with cooperation within Kosovo
- Based on the network: further elaboration of the vocational education project



The role of the World water Academy was to lead the organization of the course and program and to tailor the material to the needs in Kosovo. Besides this, WWA were requested to find out the possibilities and kick-start a first network to network and exchange knowledge in the field of wastewater treatment in Kosovo. The hosts were the University of Mitrovica and Bylmeti wastewater treatment plant.