In Mr. Olijnyk’s view, the project’s manuals on the practical application of legislation have been one of its most significant outputs: “We distributed them among our forest enterprises and forest guards. They contain legal definitions of various aspects of our work - that is very important and useful to us. We definitely use these manuals in our daily work.” The manuals were so popular that the first edition soon ran out and people had to share them and use photocopies until the second edition came out.

“We want the forestry sector to be transparent, logging to be based on official decisions and criticism to be unbiased. For that, we need not only a legal change, but also close cooperation between related services and bodies. There is still a lot of work ahead of us,” concludes Mr. Olijnyk.

EU Partners
• Austrian Development Cooperation
• World Bank
• International Union for Conservation of Nature
• World Wildlife Fund

For more information
http://fleg.org.ua
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/

EU helps set up efficient forest administration to reduce illegal activities in the sector.

Carpathian forests, Ukraine, November 2007. Photo by Olexandr Kuzmin.
In cooperation with the EU, Ukraine is moving its forest administration legislation towards EU standards. The ultimate goal of the programme “Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia” is the effective management of the forestry sector and the reduction of illegal forest use.

Oleg Lystopad, World Bank consultant:

“Over the last three years, in-depth analysis has been carried out, legal and forest management changes have been introduced. Some of the future priorities include a legal framework to verify the origin of timber and the preservation of biodiversity.”

Context
Ukraine has a powerful and developing forestry sector. In recent years, concerns have been raised over illicit logging and other suspect forestry activities. Laws adopted in past 5-7 years have had little impact thus far – judging by continuing violations and crimes. According to experts, no systematic efforts have been made to assess the volume of crimes and the damage done.

Objectives
• To assess law enforcement and administration performance in the forestry sector
• To take preventive measures to detect and reduce crimes in the forestry sector
• To secure the rights of the local population and small businesses to legal use of forest resources
• To increase transparency in the forestry sector and raise public awareness on related issues.

Results
• Analysis of the legislation related to forestry activities and technologies has been conducted.
• Manuals for experts and workers in the forestry sector have been published and workshops for foresters and public have been held.
• Media coverage of forestry issues has increased to ensure transparency of the sector.
• Series of sociological studies have been carried out (on access of communities and business to forestry resources etc.), an inclusive discussion on the development of the sector have been launched.

Testimonial
“Environmentally friendly forestry is very important and so far, Ukrainian legislation has shown little respect for it. Needless to say, the forestry sector is in a difficult situation as a result,” says Roman Olijnyk, deputy head of the Forest and Hunting Department at Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast. He considers contradictions in forestry laws to be a serious obstacle to detect and investigate crimes. For instance, a lack of clear definitions in some laws means that it is often ambiguous who should bear the responsibility – the thief or the forester.

“We raised this issue with law enforcement authorities during the meetings organised through the EU-funded “Forest Law Enforcement and Governance” (FLEG) programme. We hope that this new dialogue will help us build high-quality cooperation between forestry workers and law enforcement authorities, and thus support detect crimes and penalise the guilty,” says Mr. Olijnyk.