

In the Republic of Srpska, current European Eldorado for large energy projects, construction projects of two coal power plants are progressed, TPP "Ugljevik" and TPP "Stanari". Bosnia and Herzegovina has notified Croatia about the impact of these projects on the environment of neighboring countries.

However, the Croatian authorities were too occupied by planning their coal guzzlers to react to the violation of international conventions.

In Croatia, the idea of building a new megalomaniacal coal power plant in Ploce has joined to the plans of building Plomina 3, although the town of Ploce has not solved yet the first problem of industrial pollution and its residents are still dying from asbestosis. However, apart from these local threats, and that air pollution does not need a passport, for the quality of life in Croatia is not less significantly what is happening in neighboring countries.

In the Republic of Srpska, current European Eldorado for large energy projects, construction projects of two coal power plants are progressed, TPP "Ugljevik" and TPP "Stanari", and they are planning its whole range. BiH was obliged to inform Croatia about the implementation of process of environmental impact assessment for these projects and send us parts of the study related to the cross-border impact; the citizens of Croatia must get an opportunity to express their opinion on the project.

At our request following The Law on Right to Access Information, has BiH fulfilled its obligations according to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in across state borders (Espoo Convention), we found out that the Ministry of Environment and Nature got neither notice, nor documents from BiH of the TPP "Stanari" and TPP "Ugljevik". "The Ministry of Environment and Nature will request information from the competent authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to identify the needs of cross-border environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Espoo Convention", it was a short answer from the Ministry.

However, the works on the TPP "Stanari" are already progressing well, started last year, in May, making it obvious that Croatia is very late. We're not sure that it has occurred to the Ministry should public be informed.

Besides the "H-Altera", The Civic Initiatives - group for environmental and nature protection from Slavonski Brod, sent a similar request regarding TPP "Stanari" got the same answer. This power plant is being built, in fact, about sixty kilometers far from Slavonski Brod, the town that has already greatly tempts cross-border pollution from oil refinery in Bosanski Brod, a problem that cannot move from the dead point.

At the same time, the portal Sberiskop found out a notice on the website of the Government of RS, that Croatia complied with the Espoo Convention and sent notification and documents in the neighborhood, related to start the environmental assessment process for a thermal power plant project on the natural plan Slavonski Brod, which plans to build the company Crodux Ivana Cermak.

TPP "Stanari" is planned to have a capacity of 300 MW, but an alternative start of electricity production is scheduled for 2015. In Ugljevik, which is also near the Croatian border, there were plans of building two blocks of 300 MW. The construction has not started yet, but it is scheduled for the spring of 2014. It was anticipated that the TPP "Ugljevik" has been using coal with high sulfur content of three to six percent, while in the TPP "Stanari", lignite should be used.

Pollution from the power plant in Stanari could reach levels two to ten times higher than allowed by the Directive of the European Union, according to a study commissioned by the Centre for Environment. That association from Banja Luka has launched a campaign Stop dirty energy - because the future is renewable with raising awareness of the public about the hidden costs of such projects.

" In the "Stanari" TPP are planned to use a Chinese technology with very low efficiency, which means the pollution produced for each megawatt hour will be higher than it would be with a better technology. Previous experience has also proved that this type of technology which will be used, cannot meet European standards of emissions. BiH is now required to comply with some of the EU directive, due to its membership in the Energy Community. It should be added that the EU standards over the time are becoming increasingly strict. From 2018 all members of the Energy community will have to comply with more stringent emission levels prescribed in the Directive on industrial emissions. This is an additional risk for projects such as the "Stanari" , Mr. Igor Kalaba from the Center for the Environment stressed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina should inform Croatia of both projects in their early stages, once environmental impact studies are made. Apart from organizing public discussions on which citizens can make comments and questions about the study, the ESPOO Convention provides notice of this process; opportunities to participate should be sent to the neighboring countries if there is a chance the project has an slightest impact on that country's environment.

"Bearing in mind that the construction of both TPPs is planned only a few dozen kilometers from the border with Croatia, the TPP "Ugljevik" and from the border with Serbia, we believe that there was an obligation to apply the provisions of the Espoo Convention. We found out that the competent institutions of BiH were informed from Croatia when it was needed, so that the citizens of Croatia had no opportunity to meet with the anticipated impacts of power plants on the environment. This is a serious omission and we intend to contact the secretariat of the Espoo Convention and make them familiar with the circumstances, "announces Kalaba.

How big is possible this cross-border impact we do not know, however, it is warning that the study of the environmental impact of TPP "Ugljevik 3" states that sulfur pollution from existing power plant in Ugljevik is largely transmitting over long distances to the

neighboring countries of Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro all the way to Germany, France and other European countries.

BiH is planning more new blocks TPP "Banovici", as well as TPP "Tuzla" aside from the "Stanari" TPP and new blocks in the TPP "Ugljevik". It is mentioned several possible locations for power plants in the future, such as Bugojno, Kongora, Gacko. It is important to note that BiH is one of the few exporters of electricity in the region. In the contracts is regularly stated that the concessionaires have no obligation to sell the produced electricity in BiH, and it is clear that the strong carbon guzzlers do not work in the interests of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina which will still have health consequences and environmental damage, while the benefits go mostly to investors who will not share the fate of the location in Bosnia.

Some towns in BiH, such as Tuzla, Zenica and Sarajevo now regularly break the records of air pollution, especially in the winter months, and if all plans for new coal power plants become accomplished, the situation could be even much worse.

Morning smog in Tuzla

"The damage is enormous, especially for human health. This is reflected in the shortening of life, primarily due to cardiovascular disease. However, the impact is huge on the environment and on the economy, mainly due to medical costs and absenteeism. Study of the HEAL (Health and Environment Alliance) in 2013 has showed that combustion of coal in thermal power plants in the European Union, Serbia and Turkey annually causes about 23 300 premature deaths or 250 600 lost years of life and financial loss to those countries in the amount of 54.7 billion euros per year. These are serious impacts of power plants that nobody speaks about, and such information or similar assessments you will not find in environmental impact studies for those power plants, " stressed Kalaba.

The Croatian state is to occupied by inventing of their own megalomaniacal projects and so that it does not include in time in the process in neighboring countries although the right of its participation is guaranteed by international conventions. It is certain that the Minister Zmajlović a few more times will come over in Slavonski Brod and reassure residents of the town that institutions are doing everything possible to increase their quality of life, and still just sixty kilometers away will also grow new chimneys of which Croatia has no idea officially.

Source; Serbia Energy See Desk