

Serbia: Environmental impact assessment study for waste-to energy plant an-nulled

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After an appeal filed by Initiative —Ne davimo Beograd||, the Serbian Government has annulled the environmental impact assessment study prepared by the Ministry of Environmental Protection for the waste-to-energy facility planned to be built at Vinca landfill, and ordered the repeat of procedure.

Press release from the Initiative also said that it has recently informed the European Bank for Re-construction and Development (EBRD), the Euro-pean Investment Bank (EIB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the serious flaws, in-correctly presented facts, and shortcomings in the legal process connected to preparations for the construction of the facility.

According to CEE Bankwatch Network, one of the key issues regarding the project is the fact that 68 % of Belgrade's waste is preventable, recyclable or compostable, while the project proposes to burn it instead. Unless the city's waste generation grows very fast, it may be necessary to change the law to allow waste imports in order to fulfill contractual obligations concerning the amounts of waste that need to be supplied to the facility. Furthermore, if Serbian capital is burning 66 % of its waste, the country will not be able to meet the EU recycling target, which stands at 50 % for 2020.

In July 2017, local government said that a consor-tium of Suez and Itochu was the only bidder in a tender for a public-private partnership for the processing of urban waste in Vinca. The tender was organized with the support of International Fi-nance Corporation (IFC). Suez announced that it has signed an agreement, as a part of a consorti-um with I-Environment Investments Limited, a subsidiary of Japanese company Itochu, to invest 300 million euros in the construction of waste-to-energy facility in Belgrade. This project will allow local government to close and remediate the Vinca landfill and produce over 80 MW of heat and elec-tricity, all from a renewable source. The waste-to-energy facility will be built by a joint venture of Suez and Itochu, in which both companies have equal shares, and will have an installed electricity capacity of 25 MW and heat capacity of 56 MW, processing some 340,000 tons of waste annually.

In addition, a dedicated facility will process 200,000 tons of construction and demolition waste per year. A new waste disposal designed in ac-cordance with European standards will dispose of residual waste pending the develop-ment of the new city's recycling policy. Following the comple-tion of the construction, performed by French in-dustrial engineering contractor CNIM and Serbian civil engineering group Energoprojekt, which is planned for 2021, the facilities will be operated by Suez for a 25-year term under a public-private partnership agreement.