

3RD ECRAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

ZAGREB, APRIL 23, 2015

Good morning to everybody,

For all of you that don't know me, my name is **Rrezart Fshazi**, Head of EU Integration and International Cooperation Unit at the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Albania.

First of all, I would like to thank all the persons that have worked for the organization of this meeting and the ECRAN project for the valuable contribution and support provided to Albania in the field of environment and climate change.

I am happy to be here today instead of national coordinator and present to you the comprehensive reforms that Albania has undertaken in the field of environment and climate change, which have had an impact on the approximation and implementation of environmental and climate legislation in Albania.

Except the progress achieved in the approximation of the national legislation with the EU environmental *acquis*, to be mention is also the establishment of new institutions.

As regards the main legislative and policy achievements in the field of environment, I would like to inform you that the Ministry of Environment has finished the drafting of the Environmental Cross-Cutting Strategy 2015 - 2020, which is the basic document that underlies the governmental policies in the field of environment. According to the NPEI 2015 – 2020, it will be adopted in the 3rd quarter of 2015.

In order to further progress on alignment with the Directives on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in February 2015, is adopted Law “On some amendments to the Law “On environmental impact assessment””, while in March is adopted Decision of Council of Ministers “On rules and procedures for consultation with stakeholders and public, as well as public hearing during the process of strategic environmental assessment”.

Also, in February is adopted the Law "On the accession of the Republic of Albania in the multilateral agreement among the countries of South-East Europe for implementation of the convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context”.

Aiming to improve public access to information, as well as to improve public participation in decision-making, it is worth mentioning the adoption of Law “On the Right of Information” and Law “On Public Informing and Consultation”, which add on to obligations for public authorities to guarantee civil right to have access to information either produced or held by public authorities, as well as to involve the public in the process of drafting laws, strategic national or local documents, or other policy documents of great public interest.

Decision of Council of Ministers “On determining the rules, requirements and procedures for informing and involving the public in environmental decision making”, which has been adopted in April 2014, entered into force on 21 May 2014.

Being aware of the importance of the integration process, in the new structure of the MoE is added the Sector of Approximation of Legislation. In February 2015, is established the State Inspectorate of Environment and Forestry, whose mission is to guarantee and enforce the legislation in the field of environment and forestry.

Total number of employees of SIEF will be 346.

As regards *air quality* are adopted Law “On protection of ambient air quality” and Decision of Council of Ministers “On approval of National Strategy on Ambient Air Quality”, while the draft Decision of Council of Ministers “For the assessment of ambient air quality and requirements for certain pollutants related with it”, is sent for approval to the Council of Ministers.

Also, the Ministry of Environment has prepared the first draft of Decision of Council of Ministers “On the control of Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions resulting from the storage of petrol and its distribution from terminals to service stations”, which aims to partially approximate Council Directive 94/63/EC.

A very good job can be reported as regards alignment with EU *acquis* in the area of *waste management*. In order to further progress with the approximation of the Framework Directive “On waste” a number of Decisions of Council of Ministers are adopted, while Draft Decisions of Council of Ministers “On inert waste”, DCM “On the rules on control of PCBs/PCTs disposa, as well as DCM “On waste statistics” are sent for approval to the Council of Minsters.

Also, some progress is achieved as regards waste recycling. For the first time in Albania is established the Albanian Recycling Association, which has invested about 120 million Euros on construction of recycling plants, in compliance with European standards and about 35.000 employees are employed.

To address the problem of waste disposal in unsafe dumpsites, with funding of World Bank, on March 2015, has finished the construction of the landfill in Bajkaj/Saranda, which makes it the 3rd landfill in Albania.

Although, some steps forward are done as regards alignment with *acquis*, in the area of water quality, still many efforts are needed. To be mention are the adoption of Law “On ratification of the amendments to the Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention on protection and use of transboundary water courses and international lakes”, Decision of Council of Ministers “On Environmental quality norms for surface waters”, as well as Decision of Council of Ministers “On adaption of the list of priority substances in the water environment”.

Draft Decision of Council of Ministers on “Urban waste water treatment” and Draft Decision of Council of Ministers "On the strategy, river basin management plans and flood risk management plans” are approved by the National Water Council on February 2015.

Based on the Decision of Council of Ministers “On composition, organization and operation of Technical Secretariat of the National Water Council”, in April 2014 was set up the Technical Secretariat of the National Water Council (TSNWC), which has 23 employees. TSNWC is the executive body of the National Water Council.

Pursuant to the Decision of Council of Ministers “On determining the area of state responsibility of the MoE, amended”, from February 2015, the Directorate of Water Resources Policies, has passed under the administration of the MoARDWA, together with the local authorities (6 WBA) and the State Inspectorate of Water.

With the aim to protect the environment, in the field of *nature protection* are adopted Law “On some amendments and addenda to Law “On biodiversity protection”, Law “On an amendment to the Law “On determination of the rules and procedures for international trade of endangered species of wild flora and fauna”, Decision of Council of Ministers “On the approval of natural habitat types, plants, animals and birds of interest for the European Union”, as well as Decision of Council

of Ministers “On the establishment, organization and functioning of Rescue Centres for wild fauna species”.

After the approval of the Law “On the moratorium on hunting in the Republic of Albania”, which prohibits hunting for a two years period, from March 16, 2014, in July 2014 is adopted its action plan.

Also, there are elaborated and approved 5 Management Plans of Protected Areas, while three other are under drafting process.

In February 2015, are established the National Agency of Protected Areas and the Regional Administrations of Protected Areas, with a staff of 224 employees.

In the field of *industrial pollution prevention*, aiming to clarify and detail the activities that should be equipped according the law requirements, respectively with the Environmental Permits Type A, B and C are adopted the amendments to the Law “On Environmental Permits”. Also, is adopted Decision of Council of Ministers “On the determination of specific requirements, conditions and rules for the review of environmental permits of type A, B and C, for the transfer of environmental permits, for the conditions of environmental permits and the detailed rules for the review by the competent authorities till to the issuance of the permits from NLC”.

Since Seveso II Directive will be repealed in May 2015, the Draft Law "On the control of the risks of major industrial accidents, caused by hazardous substances", which aims full approximation with this Directive, will be revised in order to be in full compliance with Directive 2012/18 / EC (Seveso III).

A DCM on approval of the procedure and requirements for equipment with Ecolabel, manner of issuance, use and its validity, is adopted on March 2015.

Aiming to bring Albania in line with EU acquis and to regulate the import and export of chemical substances, during November 2014 - March 2015, the Ministry of Environment in cooperation with ECRAN project, EC TAIEX unit and the Swedish Chemicals Agency, has organized in Tirana, 5 TAIEX Expert Missions, whose aim was to assist the staff of the responsible institutions in the field of chemicals to draft new legislation and review the drafted legislative package.

In this regard are drafted a number of legal acts, which are foreseen to be adopted within 2015, such as Draft Law “On Chemicals”, Draft Decision of Council of Ministers “On classification, packaging and labelling of chemicals”, Draft Decision of Council of Ministers “On import and export of dangerous substances”, etc.

As regards, current and planned technical assistance projects relevant to ECRAN in the field of nature protection, I can mention:

- IPA 2013 Natura 2000 project, which has started in the beginning of 2015 and the contract for its implementation is awarded to Italian Cooperation (Cooperazione Italiana) in joint venture with IUCN - 4.4 million Euros for 37 months. The project will contribute to the implementation of 5 management plans of protected areas and identification of preliminary network of Special Areas of Conservation (Natura 2000 sites) network in Albania.
- A regional National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan indicators development project that will contribute to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan implementation, coordinated by UNEP regional office for Europe;

Planned projects include:

- a potential GEF funded project in cooperation with UNDP on the improvement of biodiversity and protected monitoring system in Albania;
- A potential ABS (Access and benefit sharing) regional project for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol;

Regarding climate change, Albania associated itself with most of the formal EU positions in the international context to reach the 2015 Climate Agreement and is also engaged in preparing its intended nationally determined contribution to the 2015 Climate Agreement . Intended Nationally Determined Contribution will be realized with the contribution of donors operating in various projects in the field of climate change, such as the EU Delegation, UNDP, GIZ Regional project of the EU, ECRAN, LOCSEE etc.

In this regard, on 17 February 2015, in Tirana, was held the II Meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change, led by the Deputy Minister of Environment. The meeting was attended by representatives from UNDP regional office in Istanbul, UNDP Office in Albania, as well as representatives of GIZ. A road map for coordinating the process and mobilizing all financial and human resources for drafting the INDC is under preparation. A consultative meeting with donors working on climate change, on technical steps on preparation of INDC, is held on 15 April 2015, in the premises of the MoE. The INDC is foreseen to be submitted within 1 October 2015.

In the framework of the GIZ Regional Project “Climate Change Adaptation in the Western Balkans”, the MoE with the assistance of GIZ is working on the drafting of the National Plan for Adaption to Climate Changes, which will identify the country needs for adaption, vulnerable

sectors and measures to address the needs. According to NPEI 2015 – 2020 it will be adopted in December 2015.

In this regard, a first mission took place from 16 – 20 February 2015 to lay the groundwork and organize the further activities for developing the Albanian NAP in close cooperation with the MoE and selected line ministries.

The drafting process of the National Strategy for Climate Change is foreseen to start in June 2015, with the launch of the IPA 2013 project on Climate Change.

In order to further progress in the alignment with climate acquis, in December 2014 is adopted Decision of Council of Ministers No. 865 of 10.12.2014 “On the prevention and reduction of fluorinated greenhouse gas emissions”, which partially approximates the Parliament and Council Regulation "On fluorinated greenhouse gases".

Also, the Ministry of Energy and Industry responsible for fuel quality has partially transposed some EU Directives on fuel quality such as Directive 98/70/KE; 1999/32/EC and 93/12/EEC.