

REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

04-00-2619

03. November 2021

Subject: *Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure in a Transboundary Context for the Project "Building the New Port Capacities of the Port of Prahovo, Negotin Municipality"*

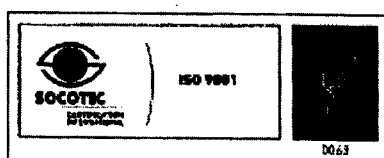
DEAR MINISTER,

In connection with Note № 20942 of 30 September 2021 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, received in the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria through diplomatic channels on 5 October 2021, with letter to the Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria № 353-02-2266/2021-03 of 3 September 2021 attached, informing about the report on environmental impact assessment for the project "Construction of new port capacities of the port of Prahovo, Negotin municipality" published on the website of the Ministry for Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, I would like to inform you about the comments and recommendations made by the Bulgarian institutions on the documentation, including the possible transboundary impact of environmental activities in potentially affected areas, as follows:

The port of Prahovo, Negotin municipality is located approximately at 13 km to the border of Bulgaria, given that our country is located in the lower reaches of the Danube river, possible negative impacts on the environment, including also on river biodiversity will have a repercussion.

The information presented in item 5.2. State of flora and fauna (p. 75) of the EIAR is insufficient, as there is no description of the flora and fauna and their condition.

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The construction of new river port capacities generally leads to changes in chemical, biological, hydrodynamic, geological and other factors and there is a possibility of environmental problems. The effect and scale of possible environmental problems depend not only on the implementation of the new port facilities, but also on environmental factors such as riverbed condition, sedimentation, clogging and congestion with silt, available benthic organisms and ecosystems, river bottom structures and geological formations, fish habitats, etc. During the implementation, movements of fish and other river organisms may be observed, caused by disturbances within and near the new port capacities.

It is necessary to develop requirements and measures for prevention, reduction or as complete elimination as possible of the probable adverse consequences of the implementation of the investment proposal.

With regard to the monitoring program (item 9.0. Monitoring of Environment Pollution-Monitoring, p. 113), we express the following remarks:

This chapter is structured incorrectly:

9.0. monitoring of environmental pollution - monitoring

9.1. state of the environment before the start of the project

9.2. **parameters on the basis of which harmful effects on animals can be determined the middle**

9.2.1. *Water monitoring*

9.2.2. *Sediment monitoring*

9.2.3. *Soil and groundwater monitoring*

9.2.4. *Air monitoring*

9.2.5. *Noise monitoring*

9.2.6. *Parameters for monitoring the characteristics and quantities of waste materials generated in the complex*

The considered monitoring parameters from 9.2.1. to item 9.2.6 should not be considered in terms of "harmful effects on **animals**", but as parameters for monitoring the state of the environment.

With regard to the following text on flora and fauna:

„*Flora and fauna*

Representatives of flora and fauna that may be endangered by the implementation and regular operation of the Project in question have not been identified at the subject location. There are no biologically valuable species from the aspect of biodiversity on the location and in the immediate vicinity. When analyzing the autochthonous fauna in the observed area, the presence of rare species that would be the subject of interest for special

protection measures is not characteristic. Of the animals, widespread species adapted to the anthropogenic presence.“

The Danube River is a valuable habitat for sturgeon species, which are globally endangered species and subject to protection. Also, habitats along the Danube are often wetlands and important for the conservation of birds and other species, so we cannot agree that no biologically valuable species are available at the port site and in the surrounding area.

In the same item, a brief description of the monitoring parameters is given (pp. 113-118). We propose to include the parameter "River and Coastal Ecology", which should include different groups of organisms, sampling methods and measurements, as at the moment there is no parameter for monitoring habitats and biodiversity.

We offer item 9.2. to be renamed as *Parameters, methodologies for monitoring and measures*, while each sub-item clearly distinguishes the monitored parameters and the applied monitoring methodologies in two separate parts, including new texts on measures in cases of accidents and/or registered adverse effects (e.g. Measures against adverse effects).

The site of the new port capacities of the port of Prahovo will be supplied with drinking water from the existing water supply system of the settlement. There is no sewage collector for domestic and fecal waters on the site, but in the future it is planned to build a sewerage system, including 2 treatment plants for domestic and fecal waters. Until their construction, it is planned to use 2 watertight septic tanks, and the report emphasizes that this is a temporary solution. The two watertight septic tanks will be serviced by an authorized company, in accordance with Serbian law, without specifying where the wastewater from the septic tanks will be transported and treated. In this regard, I propose to add a condition for the mentioned authorized company to transport the wastewater from the septic tanks before the nearest wastewater treatment plant / WWTP /.

From the presented information it is clear that the implementation of the investment proposal (IP) is planned to take place within the boundaries of the current port complex.

The presented report contains various sections in which the health and hygiene aspects of the environment and the risk to human health (both for workers and the population) are analyzed and assessed during the construction phases, the subsequent operation of the investment proposal and its closure, but only on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

The presented report does not contain the necessary information and assessment of the state of the environmental and living factors in the affected territories and areas in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context is cited in the Report as a used legal provision, but the analytical part of the EIA does not

contain such an assessment. We believe that a specialized section should be set out in the report to analyze the potential for transboundary impact, incl. accidents involving hazardous substances, along with health aspects and measures to prevent and limit them.

In view of the above, the EIA report and the specialized section in it should be supplemented and these issues should be elaborated in detail and considered in the following aspects for the affected settlements, areas and territories in the Republic of Bulgaria:

1. Complete, comprehensive and well-illustrated information about the location and exact distances from the nearest settlements and other sites subject to health care, such as the village of Baley, Bregovo municipality, 11 km away from the IP, to all sites, potential hazardous sources included in the investment proposal.

2. The current state of the individual factors and components of the environment and living environment in the region (ambient air, surface and groundwater, soils, noise, etc.).

3. Identification of risk factors for damage to human health from the environment and living environment during the phases of construction, subsequent operation and decommissioning of all sites and facilities related to the investment proposal.

4. Detailed and comprehensive information on the extent of the expected adverse effects on the individual components and factors of the environment and the living environment, paying special attention to:

- the future impact on surface and groundwater and soils in the area, hence on all water sources used for drinking purposes in the affected areas, with or without an established sanitary protection area (SPA), which are affected or could be affected, due to the operation of the facilities. The emergency situation that occurred in 2006 with large-scale pollution of the Danube water from unregulated discharge of fuel oil from the refinery in Prahovo proved that the risk of negative impact on the environment and public health from transboundary river pollution is real. For this reason, we believe that the Report should contain a detailed analysis of possible 'scenarios' for pollution of the Danube as a result of emergencies or disasters in the new port, with modeling of the distribution of pollutants along the river flow and assessment of the probability and scale of affecting the coast, including with regard to the Bulgarian section of the Danube. The preventive measures and protective barriers that are planned to be provided at the port in order to prevent and limit the consequences should also be described in detail;

- the possible impact on the state of the ambient air by modeling the expected pollution from point and area sources. Due to the planned storage of hazardous substances (phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, ammonia) to be used as raw materials for the adjacent complex of chemical industry IHP „Prahovo“ („Elixir“ Prahovo), the report needs to draw conclusions about possible air proliferation of pollutants in emergency or disaster situations,

including modeling of airborne scattering of a toxic cloud in the direction of the Republic of Bulgaria, formed by fire, explosion or spill of liquid chemicals stored at the port;

- the expected noise pollution, by making the appropriate calculations of the assumed noise levels from the activity of the facilities on the border of the regulatory or residential zone of the nearest settlements;

- the presented EIA does not concern potential pollutants related to ionizing radiation. From the point of view of radiation protection, only the cargo to be handled at the port would have a potential risk. Table 13 of the document lists the goods to be treated, given that natural fertilizers and raw materials for their production, considering the possible high content of natural radionuclides, could have an impact on the environment in the event of an accident. In this regard, we recommend that the document be supplemented by indicating the measures and analyzes of water in case of accidental contamination with loads containing high concentrations of natural radionuclides in them.

5. Identification of new risk factors and pollutants, if such are expected during the implementation of the investment proposal.

6. Identification of the potentially affected population and territories, zones and/or sites subject to health protection, depending on the territorial scope of the impacts on the environment. This should be done on the basis of mathematical modeling of the distribution and forecast calculations of the predicted concentrations and levels of harmful emissions into the environment.

7. Forecast estimate for the degree of the expected reduction of the environmental pollution by the separate types of pollutants, if such is expected, as a result of the implementation of the Project.

8. Characteristics of the individual risk factors in terms of their impact on human health and their comparison with the current hygiene standards and requirements for the affected residential areas. Identification of the most important risk factors for the affected population.

9. Assessment of the possibilities for combined, complex, cumulative and remote impact of the risk factors for the adversely affected population, taking into account the activity of other ports or production enterprises in the region, including those on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

10. To assess the risk of harm to human health and propose measures for health protection and risk management.

In view of the above, the comments and recommendations made should be taken into account, and the report should include a specialized section in which to analyze the potential for transboundary impact, including of accidents with dangerous substances, including with

regard to health aspects and of the measures for their prevention and limitation, the same to be provided to the Bulgarian side for an opinion.

In conclusion, I would like to express my readiness for future successful cooperation between our two countries.

Sincerely,

ASEN LICHEV

Minister of Environment and Water