

Mr. Neykov
Director of the Energy Community of South East Europe Secretariat



Porto Romano Power Plant, Albania

Dear Mr Neykov,

I am writing on behalf of the EDEN Center (Environmental Center for Development Education and Networking) based in Tirana, Albania. One of our working pillars is to ensure proper public participation in decision-making especially when there are potential environmental impacts involved.

In this framework I would like to request from you information about the Energy Community of South East Europe in relation to our concerns with Albanian energy projects that are considered as a priority by the Community.

We are very concerned about the coal-fired thermo-power plant planned by Italian company ENEL in Porto Romano, near Durres, with two 800 MW units, whose environmental impact assessment is currently under consideration. Most of the electricity from this investment is destined for Italy, whilst the local community would suffer from the pollution impacts in an area where air quality is already below national standards. In addition we consider it questionable to construct a massive coal-fired plant in a country that has very little coal of its own and which would have to import it.

We understand that south-east European countries developing energy projects are able to put their projects forward as regional priorities under the auspices of the Energy Community of South East Europe, and that an updated version of this list is due to be approved at the Ministerial Council meeting in Zagreb on 18th December this year.

We are concerned that the Porto Romano plant may be included on this list, thus giving it high-level backing which may be used by the Albanian government as a reason for pushing ahead with it. Could you tell us whether the draft update has already been done and whether Porto Romano is indeed present there? If the draft update has not been carried out yet, who should we contact about this and what criteria are used to include projects on the list?

We are concerned that the criteria used for this list have not been sufficient to prioritise only the best projects. The Vlora thermo-power plant in Albania has already been prioritised by the Energy Community. It was built in spite of the mass public opposition, causing the destruction of pine forest and sandy beaches in the Vlora bay. It is now undergoing tests and was expected to be operational in 2010, although in a declaration by the Minister of Economy of 21st of November this year it was stated that the cost of electricity production in Vlora TPP would be 2.5 times more expensive than that of imported electricity.* Therefore the Vlora TPP may end up as reserve capacity for cases of energy crisis, eg caused by dry year with decreased electricity production from hydro power, which we do not consider a sufficient justification for the harm done to the

environment. We hope that no more such projects will receive the backing of the ECSEE.

We look forward to your response and thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Anisa Xhitoni
EDEN Center