



**Center for Ecology and Sustainable  
Development**

Korzo 15/13  
24000 Subotica  
Phone: +381 65 55 23 191  
Fax: +381 24 523 191  
zvezdan@bankwatch.org

Subotica/ Serbia, 27 may 2009.

To:

**Mr Hakan Lucius**

Head of Division

Public Information and Relations with Civil Society

email: [h.lucius@eib.org](mailto:h.lucius@eib.org)

Cc. to: [infopol@eib.org](mailto:infopol@eib.org)

**Highly respected,**

Reason for this letter is the ongoing situation in Belgrade city related to the reconstruction of “Gazela” bridge in downtown Belgrade- Serbia, over the Sava River on TEN Highway corridor X, and the planned resettlement process of more than 100 mostly Roma families living in vicinity or under the bridge in non hygienically conditions in so called slam settlement.

EIB signed the loan for reconstruction of the bridge with the Serbian government in 2007 amounting 33 million EUR and the Serbian parliament ratified this agreement and provided sovereign guarantee in the beginning of September 2008.

**Background:**

The Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), a precondition for the EIB's and EBRDs financing of the reconstruction of the Gazela Bridge, is not yet ready (there are even clear signs that the new version is still in a very early phase), almost two years after the approval of the project from the side of EIBs board. Even simple questions to the city and national authorities on the status of the plan are still unanswered. Moreover there are signs that the City of Belgrade is planning to develop some kind of non-standard provisional RAP, including ad hoc solutions and the forced expulsion of people with no identity papers, or people who have come to Belgrade from other parts of Serbia. This is in clear violation of people's right to choose where to live.

As primary issues within the RAP formulation process, we see:

- 1) A lack of open public consultation with the resettled and the host communities. Where communication and negotiations are carried out, this is done with selected representatives of the Roma community.
- 2) A lack of sustainable economic solutions for the employment of Roma people once they will be taken far from the center of the city and away from recyclables, which is the primary source of their income.

- 3) Alternative scenarios for resettlement and housing have not been assessed in depth in consultation with the Roma and host communities as the IFC's OD 4.30 policy on resettlement prescribes. The only scenario to have been made publicly available but only after intelligence work of affected host population, was the Ovca suburban settlement, which was to host the Gazela community and other socially vulnerable inhabitants and their families from different parts of Belgrade. This scenario would inevitably have led to ghetto solution, as some representatives of the responsible Ministry for Social Affairs and the national and political representatives of the Roma community have recognized.
- 4) The proposed sites for the construction of new settlements seem to have no valid land use permits. This situation may lead to legal status problems for the settlement and people living there in the future, making them more vulnerable as a result of a lack of tenancy rights.
- 5) A lack of systematic solutions for the inclusion of Roma children in the school system: the previous RAP proposed a year's preparatory work by NGOs with the children from the Gazela community, and the creation of social clubs in the host communities. This inadequate approach to the problem demonstrates that failing to involve competent parties such as the National Education Council results in partial and short-term solutions.
- 6) A lack of personal identification documents for the Roma. Only a few Gazela inhabitants have the documents necessary for medical care, schooling, official employment etc. A census of the community was conducted two years ago, yet so far very few people have obtained IDs.

**- Having in mind all of these comments** we would like to raise question about how come the EIB signed the agreement with the Serbian government without having finalized and approved Resettlement program?

-What social standards is the EIB referring to in this particular project of resettlement?

-How did the EIB safeguard that the best standards are used from the side of Serbia and Belgrade related to preparation and implementation of IFC OD 4.30, or in other words is there the part in the loan agreement which is prescribing in detail the condition for obligation that resettlement action plan is prepared, implemented and monitored in a democratic/ consultative/ transparent/ inclusive way?

-Is there a possibility to gain access to the parts of the loan agreement related to social, environmental and health constraints related to the project?

-How will EIB ensure that the Serbian government as a sovereign guarantor is involved as a responsible party in the process of resettlement of the Gazela community?

-Moreover we would like to request disclosure of Appraisal Report (environmental and social part), proposal from Management Committee to the Board of Directors, Social Assessment and European Commission opinion!

**Related to all already mentioned, we are asking you kindly to consider sending delegation which will meet with the representatives of the Roma community from Gazela, interested Roma and non Roma CSOs and also representatives of the Roma national council and to thus establish consultative and sustainable process of resettlement!**

Thank you for your kind help and answers and looking forward to further communication.

Yours sincerely,

Zvezdan Kalmar

National coordinator for CEE Bankwatch Network,

Center for Ecology and Sustainable Development- CEKOR

Korzo 15/13, 24000 Subotica, Serbia

Tel: +381 65 5523 191

Fax: +381 24 523 191

Mob: +381 65 5523 191

E-mail: [zvezdan@bankwatch.org](mailto:zvezdan@bankwatch.org), [vodana@gmail.com](mailto:vodana@gmail.com)

[www.cekor.org](http://www.cekor.org)