

Report on the meeting with DG Regio

Thursday, May 22, 2008
Office of the European Commission Delegation, Skopje

On the meeting there were:

From DG Regio
Erich Unterwurzacher, Head of Unit, IPA/ISPA
Victor Da- Fonseca, Desk officer for Macedonia, IPA/ISPA

From EC Delegation in Skopje
Emmanuelle Guiheneuf, Second Secretary
Teodora Andreeva, Task Manager

From NGOs
Ana Colovic, Eco-sense

The main topics for the meetings were:

1. Selection procedure for the Monitoring Committee of the Regional Development Operational Programme
2. EIA procedure for the Demir Kapija Smokvica project

The topics were related to previous communication between Ana Colovic and DG Regio/DG Environment.

On the issue of the selection of representatives of the eNGO movement to the Monitoring Committee, it was concluded that the process was at the end carried out according to the eNGO wishes and demands. The process was changed after an intervention from Ana Colovic on the proposed process by the Ministry of environment that prevented eNGOs to vote for the candidates. It was also concluded that on another occasion, there should be a discussion whether we can replicate this process in Macedonia for other processes, and whether it is assessed as a successful process.

The second topic occupied most of the time on the meeting. Ana Colovic gave an overview of the situation with the EIA process since December 2007. According to the Ministry of environment the public hearing is supposed to be held on June 10th. However, a notification for the process has still not been published (neither have all previous documents that need to be published such as the decision of the Ministry for the necessity for EIA as well as the results from the scoping process). It was clearly stated by the DG region that **if Macedonian institutions do not carry out the procedure according to the legislation and EC Directives, the project will not be financed.**

So far, the procedures have not been followed completely. The non-technical resume is not published and the annexes in the EIA study are missing.

DG Regio also pointed out that there is a need for a complementary EIA, because in November 2007, they learned that there is a significant danger to the Bela Voda cave if Alternative B of the road is chosen. Even then, Mr. Clements from DG Environment proposed that the Alternative B is changed and it is actually a combination of the old Alternatives A and B (it starts as alt A and continues as alt B). A complementary EIA was supposed to be carried out and it was a prerequisite for EC to consider the project. At the meeting it was still unclear whether the published EIA study is the new study or the old one. It was agreed that after the meeting Ana Colovic will check this and inform DG Regio immediately.

It was concluded on this meeting that Ana Colovic will take notice of the process and inform DG Regio and DG Environment about any problems in the process as well as of the results of the public hearing.