



EU AND SERBIA AT WORK

FACT SHEET

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Serbia has air quality problems similar to those of other industrialized countries notably in the cities and in centres of economic activity with high pollution potential. The energy industry, steel smelters and traffic but also the significant burning of fossil fuel and wood in private homes contribute to poor air quality in almost all of Serbia's agglomerations – with negative impact on public health and environment. To improve the situation Serbia decided to introduce EU air quality standards into its legislation and develop the capacity to achieve these standards over time. This required to enhance the legal and institutional framework for ambient air quality protection/management, support Serbia's first air quality assessment, develop action plans for cleaner air in selected agglomerations and strengthen capacity at central and local level with regards to their implementation/enforcement. Pre-requisite for this work was the set - up of a country wide network of **air quality monitoring stations** which has been done **with EU funds**.

Primary project beneficiaries are the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and the Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), as well as Autonomous Province of Vojvodina - Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection, and municipalities of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Bor. Other beneficiaries include Serbia's Public Health Institutes.

EU assistance provided **€ 6 million** for capacity building notably through Twinning with EU member state institutions and significant investment in Serbia's Air Quality Monitoring Infrastructure.

This strategic investment at the level of the regulator is flanked by investments in excess of € 100 million in direct air pollution abatement in the energy sector and energy efficiency measures. Other EU funded programmes like those investing in industrial pollution prevention and control (IPPC) and regional waste management centres also have a direct impact on reducing air pollution.

RESULTS

- Serbian citizens have now real time online information and thus full transparency of air quality across Serbia. The current air quality monitoring system also allows for early warning in case of exceedences of limit values of air pollutants, including in case of industrial accidents.
- The division of Serbia into air quality zones and agglomerations and their characterization enables Air Quality Assessment and Air Quality Management in line with the requirements of EU standards as transposed in the Serbian Law on Air Protection.
- Citizens living in agglomerations with air quality problems benefit from the implementation of air quality plans.
- The institutional capacity built at the Serbia Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to assess, monitor and report on ambient air quality in compliance with EU standards instils citizens' trust in the credibility of data important for their well- being and thus trust into a critical state institution.





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WORDS OF USERS: The Air Quality Plan for the agglomeration of Bor adopted in 2013, is the first such plan developed and approved in Serbia. The Copper Smelter in Bor had been recognized as the primary source of high levels of the pollutant sulfur dioxide in the air. To address the problem a new smelter had to be built and is now expected to commence operation in May 2015. The concentration of sulphur dioxide in ambient air in Bor is expected to be reduced by 90% compared to current levels.

“One of the main results of the EU assistance was preparation of three pilot air quality plans for agglomerations Belgrade, Novi Sad and Bor. Having in mind that AQ plans are relatively new tool of Policy and Planning in the field of air protection in the Republic of Serbia that shall be used in zones and agglomerations with poor (category III) air quality, this activity was very useful for Republic of Serbia”, said **Dušica Radojičić, advisor in the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection.**

“Introducing EU recognized methods of measuring air quality parameters required the training of local experts for their use and analysis of measurement results. The capacity-building projects funded by the EU provided that SEPA experts along with representatives of local governments learn the correct procedures for measurement, control, processing and analysis of results of measurements in order to obtain valid assessment of air quality at the level of the Republic of Serbia” said **Tihomir Popovic, Head of the SEPA Air Quality Control Department.**

The current system of air quality monitoring as basis for air quality management is already delivering significant benefits. At present the EU is funding a new contract with SEPA as coordinator and primary beneficiary and which will link all of Serbia’s air quality monitoring networks i.e. those operated by SEPA, the Republic and Belgrade Public Health Institutes, cities and municipalities.

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