



**Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

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22-26 Nemanjina St
Belgrade

**ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
Minister, Ms Grațiela - Leocadia Gavrilescu**

Bvd. Libertății nr. 12, Sector 5
Bucharest

Subject: Response to your comments regarding Program of the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023 and the Report on Strategic Environmental Assessment of Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023

Dear Ms Minister,

I would like to thank you for your letter № 5816 dated 15 September 2017 concerning Program of the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023 and the Report on Strategic Environmental Assessment of Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia has carefully considered your opinion and comments regarding the Program of the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023 and the Report on Strategic Environmental Assessment of Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with Projections until 2030, for the period 2017-2023

Hereby we are sending you answers to the questions you asked to worry about:

Q1: In the field of ‘renewable energies’, the program provides the possibility of developing reversible hydropower plants and micro-hydropower projects on cross-border water courses, which have a potential impact on the quality of biological elements provided by the Water

Framework Directive no.2000/60/EC, namely invertebrate benthic fauna, fish fauna and phytobenthos. We consider that in this sector, the program should take into account the principle of not deteriorating the status of water bodies, because such a deterioration can generate a significant cumulative impact on the downstream/upstream water bodies, including on the territory of Romania. This is confirmed by the information from the environmental report that shows that micro-hydropower projects will be provided with migratory passages of the ichthyofauna and that their operation will ensure a minimum down stream flow necessary to aquatic ecosystems. We mentioned, that Romania in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive no.2000/60/EC, has developed a methodology for the ecological flow as being the required flow for the protection of aquatic ecosystems both from the quantitative point of view and its dynamics in order to achieve the environmental objectives for the surface water bodies. Therefore we consider it necessary to correlate this flow with the one proposed in the case of the installation of hydropower/micro hydropower plant by the Serbian side on cross-border water courses, the values of which may differ. In this respect we ask for Romania to be notified for participation in the decision-making process, with the aim to identify common solutions, even for projects that are not listed in Annex 1 to the Espoo Convention, but which may have a transboundary impact, to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of surface water bodies.

A1: Please have in mind that this is a Decree which in general define the main projects, measures and activities which should be realized in the perido from 2017 up to 2023. Each project has to be realized in accordance with the procedure and national legislation of the Republic of Serbia. The Ministry of Mining and Energy of the Republic of Serbia can realize activities and provide public consultations only in accordance with its jurisdiction and in accordance with the national legislation of the Republic of Serbia.

Q2: Regarding the accumulations and the Iron gates 1 and 2 (Djerdap 1,2), considering the transboundary nature of the proposed works and the importance of the Danube Convention, we would like to be mentioned in the program the efforts of the signatory states of the Danube Convention, to carry out the study feasibility of migration possibilities of the ichthyofauna (especially sturgeons), identifying the possibilities of financing the feasible technical measures in order to improve the longitudinal connectivity of the Danube water bodies.

A2: Accepted. In section 3.1.3. Sub-area of environmental protection in the field of electricity, on page 66, the following new paragraph is added in front of paragraph 3: "In connection with the revitalization of Djerdap 1 which is in progress and is covered by the POS as well as in connection with all future capital works in related to HE Djerdap 1 and 2, the signatory States of the Danube Convention have make efforts to carry out the study feasibility of migration possibilities of the ichthyofauna (especially sturgeons), identifying the possibilities of financing the feasible technical measures in order to improve the longitudinal connectivity of the Danube water bodies.

Q3: In the environmental report is not foreseen a chapter/subchapter that refers strictly to the impact om biodiversity, or on the natural capital in the Republic of Serbia, or a transboundary impact.

The chapter “The transboundary impact” does not present information about the biodiversity in Romania, as a state potentially affected by the works proposed by the Program, although the proposed projects in the hydroelectric sector can have a significant negative impact on the Danube River. Measures for the protection of natural capital are generally treated and it is not very clear if by their application the quality of natural capital existing in Serbia or across borders, will be improved.

A3: Partially accepted. Having in mind that the Program constitutes a document of strategic type, without spatial determination of individual projects or knowledge of technical/technological aspects of functioning of individual projects, it is impossible to determine and give quantitative assessment of potential impact at the level of endangering specific protected areas, and particularly at the level of flora and fauna species and individuals. For that reason the SEA processing level was adjusted to the level of the Program processing and there is no detailed assessment which would full reply to the above-mentioned comments. Nevertheless, the aspect of the Program solution impact on biodiversity, geodiversity, flora, fauna and natural areas is dealt with throughout the SEA document, including the goals formulated within the context of the above-mentioned comments. The assessment of listed impacts was made in the form of monitoring potential trends in the environment and space, which is in compliance with modern approaches in the production of SEA, including the consideration of cumulative and synergetic impacts. Detailed assessment of impacts of specific investment projects on biodiversity, protected areas and habitats will be processed at EIA level when all elements are known for such detailed assessment, and then the cooperation with neighbouring countries will be re-established, as was the case with EIA for the project of construction of Block B3 in the thermal plant Kostolac B, where the cooperation was established with Romania. Within Chapter 4 of the SEA document – Guidelines for the production of assessment of impacts at lower hierarchy levels there is an instruction for the impact assessment at the level of further and detailed implementation of this document. However, having in mind that in this part of SEA there is no particularly or explicitly stated need for the impact assessment in the border region for projects which may have a negative impact on the neighbouring countries, this part of SEA was supplemented with the following text: For all those projects that may have a negative impact on the population health, environment quality, natural and protected areas, biodiversity and geodiversity of the neighbouring countries, in EIA production and in compliance with ESPOO convention, it is necessary to consult the neighbouring countries during the production procedure and/or adoption of the specific impact

Q4: In the environmental report, a monitoring Program over a period of 2 years is mentioned, as well as the application of measures for environmental protection. We consider it necessary that the proposed measures to have also effect of protecting the population health. We also consider that the results of the pollutants monitoring Program should be brought to the knowledge of the Romanian authorities. If an impact on the environment, as result of exceeding the limit values stipulated in the legislation in this field is noted, we consider it necessary that Serbia should carry out an impact study on the population health in the vicinity of the border with Romania.

A4: Accepted. Chapter 5 of the SEA document was supplemented with a new item: Monitoring the impact on the population health

The relevant authorities should monitor the impact of those effects which were considered to have potentially negative implications (direct or indirect) on the population health. In that

context, as well as in the context of potential transboundary impacts, the neighbouring countries should be informed about the results of the pollutants monitoring Program if any exceeding of the limit values is found in relation to those stipulated in the legislation in this field. According to the acquired results it is necessary to make the impact assessment on the population health in the vicinity of the project causing substantial pollution if that project is near the border with the neighbouring countries.

Sincerely Yours,

MINISTER

Goran Trivan