

Involvement of environmental Civil Society Organizations in the EU Environment Partnership  
Programme for Accession (EPPA)

**Inputs<sup>1</sup> from Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development**

The main environmental challenges

Negotiation Position for Chapter 27 in January 2020, after final approval by the government, it is submitted to EC. Negotiation Position for Chapter 27 was prior to final Governmental approval, discussed and approved by National Convention of EU, Committees for EU and for Environment of Serbian Parliament.

The Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) prepared a national State of the Environment report for 2018; approved by the Government and Committee for Environment of Serbian Parliament in December 2019.

However, **the system for environmental protection is not functioning at satisfactory level. Although legal framework is advanced (EU directives transposed), implementation of laws is “too little to slow”.**

For example, **regarding mini hydro power plants, local citizens and CSOs at the number of such locations are showing commitment not to allow small hydro on their rivers.**

Also, as an example, **the air quality has been an issue in Serbia. Governmental respond to issue shows that currently environmental sector is not considered by integral approach as multisectoral issue – we face situation that different ministers and prime minister address the issue just from their sector approach. These also show low capacity for cooperation of current environmental ministry with other ministries. CSOs activities to straighten environmental sector (number of different activities and initiatives) are not taking seriously and / or with very limited influence.**

Our experience in participating in policy and decision-making and implementation

Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> (Environmental Ambassadors, EASD) as a non-for-profit professional association focusing work on education, as well as the research and science (professional and citizens) promotion, in the areas of sustainable development and environment, has special consultative status in UN ECOSOC; it is accredited

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from joint input from 3 EPPA organizations from Serbia, under preparation

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in United Nations – UNEP (UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum); Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) NGO Focal Point; National Member of The Foundation for Environmental Education – FEE Serbia; Institutional Member of ACUNS - Academic Council on the United Nations System; Member of the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform; Member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network – SDSN; IPEN network Participating Organization; EEB network, ECSA network. **Organization is forwarding global environmental and sustainable development messages to the national arena**, like SDGs implementation and Shadow report to the 2019 Voluntary National Report on Agenda 2030, **where we show that environment and gender issues are not considered in this governmental document**. Also, we were part of global awareness raising at national level **against mercury amalgam in dental industry**.

EASD gained experience in **building a strong network of organizations that serve as specific force in advocacy and policy improvement giving the voice to the citizens**, since 2012, through participation in three phases of ENV.net projects, and regional ENV.net network of CSOs. Currently, EASD is a partner in a new round of ENV.net project: “ENV.net factoring the environmental portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda” (reference number 2017/394-372). During this project period **bridges built among key stakeholders in accession countries** to be used to pay more media and decision maker’s attention on key environmental issues toward EU integration.

The milestones of this regional ENV.net network at Serbian national level are:

- EASD prepare analysis paper “**Circular economy** in Serbia – process started” (**with recommendations** to use circular economy as a cornerstone of industrial strategy, to consider previously formulated Initiative to update and rethink the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, to update the waste strategy, to update and rethink Agenda 2030, possibly in the form of the Plan for Agenda 2030 implementation, to build/strengthen and monitor effectiveness of multi-stakeholder coalition to foster the circular economy process, and accelerate the dissemination of knowledge and awareness-raising about circular economy topics).Also, EASD initiated to think on **textile production and consumption**.

- EASD widely promotes **climate change and circular economy issues** through a network of 112 Eco-Schools in Serbia, including “**Caravan for Climate**” and **responsible eating recommendation**.

- EASD, at national level, is **participating in EU accession process, with thematic position papers, analysis and reflection papers** (as EASD, as ENV.net network, and National Convention to EU member), as well as by participating at different meetings and events. To mention, that EASD with Serbian Chamber of Commerce, each year on June 5h (this year will be 16<sup>th</sup> year) organize “Environment to Europe Conference”, proven as good platform to exchange information related environmental sector.

- As the mile stone we consider **EASD research together with Media archive Ebart, about the attention of environment and climate change in written media in Serbia** – the outreach result is that **interest of media is low**, except in “catastrophic” situations.

Proposals to further strengthen the environmental regional cooperation

- **To further use ENV.net methodology** – This includes: contribution to EUD country progress report, contribution to country specific reports, preparation of reflection paper on key environmental issue in the country, preparation of joint studies using knowledge of CSOs that are working on specific issues, legislation monitoring, preparation and update of monitoring matrix related to specific environmental issues, results dissemination and media promotion; social media activities, participation in and contribution to the key regional, EU, UN events, strengthening capacities of CSO members, through participation in specific conferences, workshops, events, organization of advocacy/communication campaigns with grass root CSOs and media / Perform desk and field research for the selected site / Conduct site-visit/action followed with in-situ discussion among stakeholders, as well as preparation of e-learning courses with specific topics and issues covered.
- **To strengthen cooperation between CSOs and institutions**, like joint platform to deal with specific environmental issues and participation and discussion in National Convention to EU and Parliamentarian “Green chair”, **with sustainable financing assured for information/knowledge based advocacy.**