

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT,
NOVI VINODOLSKI, 16TH – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

With regard to Strategic Environmental Assessment, provisions of the Directive have been transposed into national legal systems and therefore this administrative requirement is generally met. What awaits us, is work on further implementation and understanding of this process, taking into account specificities of each country and their regional and local levels. It is necessary to strengthen the instrument and the impact of the SEA, to prevent circumvention of the obligation for conducting the SEA and to avoid repeating assessments at lower levels. It is necessary to work on ensuring that the SEA is always carried out in parallel with the development of strategies, plans or programs.

The Environmental Impact Assessment should be more focused on addressing key issues, rather than doing formal analyses. The assessments should give greater attention to cumulative impacts with existing and planned projects for which appropriate methods have to be developed. For complex projects, early stage scoping should be done in order to fully determine the content and scope of EIAs. It is necessary to develop publicly available databases and ensure their unimpeded use.

Natura 2000 is a challenge for everyone involved – it requires research, namely inclusion of experts - specialists for particular species and habitats, but also nature lovers, as well as an understanding that there is a need for development in accordance with the principle "Both humans and nature". For a successful and complete implementation of Natura 2000, implementing mechanisms have to be carefully drawn up, just like guidelines and instructions, and availability of quality data has to be ensured.

It is necessary to educate stakeholders on the purpose and mandate of individual procedures, as well as on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders themselves. Stakeholder responsibilities are insufficient or insufficiently well defined, with emphasis on the lack of accountability of the civil sector, however new regulations regarding accreditation also need to be adopted. It is necessary to improve and develop communication among all stakeholders in the process, which is something we as HUSZPO are trying to motivate. It is necessary to ensure that the public receives quality information early, because that can benefit the developer. Namely, better communication and quality of public information, could help speed up procedures, and they could be better coordinated. Unfortunately, at the First Conference only one NOG attended, while at the Second Conference, despite specific invitations, none of the civil society organizations participated. We think it is unfortunate they did not attend the Conference, since it was an opportunity to exchange and discuss their views with professional companies and institutions as well as with authorized bodies.

Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (assessment of acceptability for the ecological network) are unavoidable instruments for establishing acceptability of strategies, plans, programs and projects for the nature and the environment, which is a precondition for EU funding, as well as from other international financial institutions. It is because of their criteria, that EIAs should elaborate on a higher level topics of climate change, human health, and also social impact. The standards of the European Commission and other international financial institutions are such that only well prepared projects, and based on the programs for which SEAs have been conducted, can be supported.

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