

Opportunities and challenges for environment and health policies in the EU accession process

**Capacity-building Workshop on Environment
and Health**

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EU accession process

- Opinion on Croatia's Application for Membership of the European Union - *Acquis*
- 29 chapters
- 22nd Chapter – Environment
- 23rd chapter – Consumers and health protection
- Environment 2nd on the list of priorities in terms of work to be done
- Within environment, priorities are waste, waste water and drinking water (require lot of money)

Progress made since *acquis*

- In these 3 areas some progress has been made
- Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction and Fund for Environment Protection and Energy Efficiency invested lot of resources into sanitation and closing of illegal waste dumping sites (e.g. Jakuševac)
- Adopted Strategy for Waste Management, 2005.
- Waste return and collection systems developed as for example – incentives for citizens for return of plastic bottles

Problems with civil society participation in approximation

- Today approximation is done almost automatically
- All laws related to approximation have an “EU label” and enter into parliament legislation process under urgent procedures – not in line with constitutional law
- Result is low participation of civil society
- Example is Law on Hunting when this label is even abused in order to pass some laws that have controversial articles (in first draft it was put that 80 % of money gained from concession on hunting area goes to Croatian Hunters’ Alliance and rest to owners and state)

Civil society participation mechanisms

- Croatia does not have a clear mechanism of public participation in legislative processes
- This is sometimes substituted (more and more) through working groups for preparations of laws where NGOs are put together with scientists as members of *wornema mehanizam sudjelovanja javnosti u zakonodavnoj proceduri* osim ako nas ne stave u koordinaciju za pripremu zakona
- Problem is that government put NGOs on uncoordinated basis meaning directly
- Green Forum – network of 35 environmental organisations
- Civil society is not enough involved in 35 working groups for preparations of negotiations – untransparent, uncoordinated

Potentials and challenges of approximation

- In most areas related to environment, EU standards are higher so when we finish approximation we will have higher environment standards
- There are opposite examples however
- Law on GMOs in Croatia has to be weakened – Croatia (seed 0 % contamination) EU (seed 0,3 % contamination)
- Labeling of food is the same - 0,9 % contamination
- Law on Chemicals is written from REACH directive but not entirely (end of 2006 legislation, in April 2007 entry into force)
- Implementation of laws is worse even when laws are more strict than in EU

Civil society opportunities

- NGOs are ready to play watchdogs and by the principle of subsidiarity carry its burden in approximation
- Bigger and bigger pressure on environment and health because of industrial development, urbanisation and transport - monitoring
- PHARE fund 2006 – civil society segment has 3 areas:
Environment – environmental awareness and sustainable development education, energy, biodiversity and nature protection (Green Forum)
- Fund for Environment Protection and Energy Efficiency is still not funding NGOs

Reccommendations

- Fund established by the government for matching funds of EC funds on environment and health accessible for NGOs (20 %)
- Increase and build capacities of civil society
- Aarhus Convention ratification
- Bylaws of the Ministry should be created also through consultations with civil society
- Inspectorate should be strengthened and also put to the local level– only 32 inspectors who are not for physical planning, water or noise
- Integration of policies – development of National Strategy on Sustainable Development (according to JPOI until 2005)