



# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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## NORTH MACEDONIA: KICK-OFF EVENT OF THE PROJECT “PRODUCE-USE-RECYCLE-REUSE”

“**Produce-Use-Recycle-Reuse!**” project, awarded under the ENV.net project sub-granting call in the Republic of North Macedonia, today (2nd July, 2019) had its first, kick-off event – a regional conference for the local government representatives and eco-CSOs from the three municipalities targeted in the action. The project is carried out by Eko Zivot Kavadarci, and aims to raise the environmental awareness among the citizens from the municipalities of Kavadarci, Rosoman and Negotino with a focus on waste management (specifically of paper and plastic wastes) and in the direction of a circular model of economy. The focus theme of the event was the existing Law on Waste Management and its implementation through the local policy documents and activity plans. Reference was made also to the new draft Law on Waste Management and the novelties that will be introduced (circular economy) once it is adopted, and starts its implementation in practice. The event provided a good opportunity for the participants to discuss current developments but also the challenges that need will and knowledge, as well as finances. ENV.net MK team used the event to present the ENV.net project, and to stress the importance that waste is not only a trash – it can also bring cash, and all involved parties should start shifting the mindset from linear to circular economy. **Think globally – and act locally!**

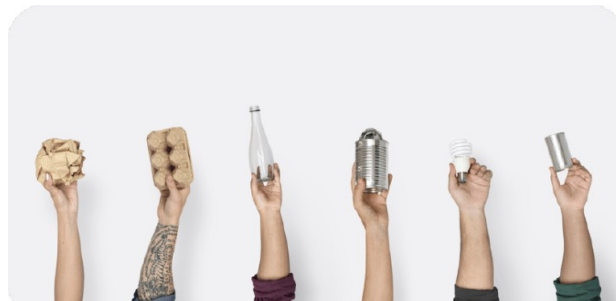


Figure 1- Source: [www.ecocleanmk.co.uk](http://www.ecocleanmk.co.uk)



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## ONE MORE CHANCE FROM UNESCO FOR OHRID!



Figure 2-Source: <http://www.exploringmacedonia.com>

*On the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (30 June – 10 July 2019), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, one of the issues discussed was the status of the Lake of Ohrid.*

As noted in the UNESCO Draft report (Criterion vii) “the distinctive nature conservation values of Lake Ohrid, with a history dating from pre-glacial times, represent a superlative natural phenomenon. As a result of its geographic isolation and uninterrupted biological activity, Lake Ohrid provides a unique refuge for numerous endemic and relict freshwater species of flora and fauna. Its oligotrophic waters contain over 200 endemic species with high levels of endemism for benthic species in particular, including algae, diatoms, turbellarian flatworms, snails, crustaceans and 17 endemic species of fish. The natural birdlife of the Lake also contributes significantly to its conservation value”.

The report notes that the main threats to the integrity of the property include uncoordinated urban development, increasing population, inadequate treatment of wastewater and solid waste, and tourism pressure, as well as a number of other issues. In addition, pollution from increased traffic influences the quality of the water, which leads to the depletion of natural resources. The highly endemic biodiversity and natural beauty of the Lake are particularly vulnerable to changes in water quality, and there is alarming evidence of a growth in nutrients threatening the oligotrophic ecology of the Lake. This oligotrophic state is the basis for its nature conservation value, and action to tackle this threat must be a priority.

Even though the Committee’s conclusion was not to remove Ohrid from the list of World Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (for now!), it put a request to the state



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authorities to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2020, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020, with a view to considering, in case of confirmation of potential or ascertained danger to its Outstanding Universal Value, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The government authorities, both national and local, at least declaratively, are committed to follow and implement all UNESCO recommendations in order to keep Ohrid on the list of World Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value. Priority should be put on protection of the natural heritage, the revitalization of the collector system, the handling of illegal buildings and the strengthening of the construction inspection in Ohrid, which obviously does not have the required capacity to deal with the problem of illegal building.

## **ECO-ACTIVISTS REACTIONS ON THE NEW DRAFT LAW ON NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE OHRID REGION**

Eco-activists openly react on the new draft Law, noting that it will open the door for harmful decisions and further destruction of the only UNESCO area in the country. The arguments are that the text of the Draft Law on Natural and Cultural Heritage Management in the Ohrid region, which was due to enter parliamentary procedure this week, is not the same as the one discussed at the public hearing at the end of 2018, and presented at the last session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Baku. Key remarks are that the legislator, without prior consultations, added an article that regulates the application of the so-called Badinter majority (ie, the double majority) when adopting the recommendations and opinions of the Council for the Ohrid region. According to non-governmental organizations, this legal solution will create a space for local powers to directly influence all recommendations, proposals and opinions that this Council will bring and will again implement harmful infrastructural projects, which will mean further destruction of the Ohrid region and will surely be the cause of the loss of UNESCO status in 2020.



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## TURKEY: “ZERO WASTE REGULATION” CAME INTO FORCE

Concerning activities on circular economy in Turkey, Regulation on Zero Waste drawn up by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation came into force on 12 July 2019. The main aim is to apply zero waste management system by 2023 and promote recycling across the country. As mentioned in the previous newsletters, Zero Waste Project initiated by the Ministry is placed at the centre of waste management policy in the country. The Project also aims to reduce the amount of waste, increase recycling and waste collection system.

## 11TH OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN RATIFIED BY THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT

The 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) prepared by the Presidency of Strategy and Budget was ratified by the Turkish Parliament and published in the Official Gazette in July 2019. The 209-page document has two main chapters. The first chapter makes an overall introduction regarding global economic and social developments as well as macroeconomic expectations about the world economy. The second chapter presents objectives of the plan in respect with a special emphasis on energy sector, economic stability, steady high economic growth, sustainable cities and environment, qualified people and strong society, sustainable development goals and so on. *Again, the Zero Waste Project is targeted to be implemented in the country through the plan as well.*



Figure 3- Source: <https://zerowasteurope.eu>



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## CALL FROM TEMA FOUNDATION TO STOP GOLD MINING IN ÇANAKKALE

TEMA Foundation, which collected nearly 100.000 signatures, started a petition to stop the gold mining operation in Kirazlı Village, Çanakkale Province. TEMA Foundation draws attention to 20.000 tonnes of "cyanide" that will be used in the project and over 195.000 trees that have been cut, four times the amount of trees indicated in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report approved by Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation.

Kirazlı is located in the northwestern Province of Çanakkale where the preparation for the construction began. The construction located 30 kilometres to Çanakkale will increase negative impacts on water resources and people living in the project area.



Figure 4- Source: TEMA Foundation



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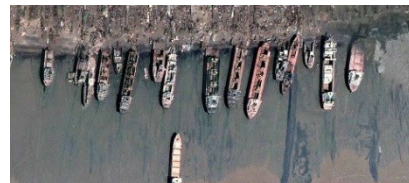
## SHIP BREAKING PROJECT IN TURKEY WILL HARM THE ENVIRONMENT AND AFFECT HUMAN HEALTH

A ship breaking or ship demolition project is under consideration to be practiced in the coastal area of Kilimli in Zonguldak Province. TEMA Foundation Representative in Zonguldak warns that various toxic substances are released during the dismantling of the ship and these pollute the environment, coastal zones and increase health risks. These substances not only affect the area where the plants are built, but also affect the area of at least 25 kilometres by asbestos through the wind and sea.

During ship breaking processes, the following substances are released and affect the environment and human health:

- -Oil spills (mineral waste): Coastal environment, ecosystem, birds and mammals
- -Mercury (heavy metals): Nervous system
- -PCB (Poly Chlorinated Biphenyl): long-lasting pollutant in the environment
- -Asbestos: Lungs
- -Dioxin: Since the cables made by PVC on the ship are burned, highly carcinogenic chemicals such as dioxin and furan are formed with toxic gases.

TEMA Foundation Representative in Zonguldak plans to raise awareness on the project at local level.



**GEMİ SÖKÜMÜNE HAYIR!  
BİZ AVRUPA'NIN ÇÖPLÜĞÜ DEĞİLİZ!**



Figure 5- Source: TEMA Foundation



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## ALBANIA: AIR QUALITY IS BECOMING A PRIORITY



*Figure 6: Visible air pollution in Tirana, Albania*

*Source: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development*



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Air pollution kills thousands of people each year across Albania and affects the health of hundreds of thousands more. Although over the years, people have become more aware of excessive air pollution causes adverse effects on human health and the environment, very little is known about the extent of negative impacts. The National Plan on Air Quality Management 2019, released on June, aims to reduce harmful pollution, including taking action on problem areas. The National Air Quality Management Plan is a planning tool, which pursues two objectives, such as: improving air quality in areas that have exceeded statutory limits, or areas where there is a high risk of exceeding limits, and maintaining the air quality level in the remaining territory. The document sets out plans to tackle emissions from a range of sources, including agriculture, industry and even wood-burning stoves. The National Air Quality Management Plan is an indefinite document and includes measures to be implemented between 2022 and 2026. In order to implement this plan, financial costs for each measure, activity and subproject have been foreseen. Some funding sources that can be taken in consideration are: financing from state budget, local government units, donors, and business investments.



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## ITALY: JULY 29TH - EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY 2019

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year.

Earth Overshoot Day is an initiative of Global Footprint Network, an international research organization that is changing the way the world measures and manages its natural resources. Through the campaign #Movetheday, it is possible to know the steps to be undertaken to really move the date and promote a more sustainable use of the natural resources; a lot of events, initiatives, best practices and lessons learnt are being channelled also in the social media by using the hashtag #movethedate.



Figure 7- Source: <https://www.overshootday.org>



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## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRASS-ROOT CSOS, MEDIA AND INDIVIDUALS (ACTIVISTS)**

1st Call for Proposals Cross-border Programme Serbia - Republic of North Macedonia 2016-2020 under the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)

Media professionalism programme 2018 - Civil Society Facility Media

The overall objective of this call for proposals is to strengthen good neighbourly relations, establish partnerships and to contribute to the development of a vibrant programme area by connecting its people and resources in a sustainable way. The priorities are:

1. To promote employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border;
2. To encourage tourism and cultural and natural heritage.

Under the priority 1, environmental aspects shall be addressed through exploring opportunities for creation of jobs through organising local value chains and promoting sustainable use of local resources (e.g. employment initiatives in green economy, circular economy, local social services, etc.).

## **SPOTLIGHT ON A PARTICULAR GRASS-ROOT INITIATIVE DIFFERENT FOR EVERY ISSUE**

After the protests organized by environmental activists and civil society organizations in July across the Balkans, the public and citizens fighting for the right to water and against run-of-river small hydropower plants are not giving up on their struggle, which culminated in the "Rakita conference - the rule of law crushed", held in Belgrade on July 19th. Despite the initial lack of reaction from the local authorities, according to the information given by the organizers of the protests - Civic Initiatives, the Defend Rivers of Mt. Stara Planina movement, and Savski Nasip -, the public attention and pressure has increased and some results have been achieved in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. Civil society organizations, activists and citizens have made it!

This is a clear signal of the importance that the environmental protection is gaining even in some societies where the living conditions are still challenging and environmental issues are not a priority.



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## MONTENEGRO: ECO-RECONSTRUCTION OF MONTENEGRO'S TPP PLJEVLJA

Montenegro's power utility Elektroprivreda Crne Gore (EPCG) has launched tendering for the environmental reconstruction of the Pljevlja thermal power plant (TPP).

The deadline to file offers expires on September 9 and EPCG expects the contract with the selected bidder for TPP Pljevlja's environmental reconstruction could be signed by the end of the year. The estimated value of the investment is EUR 45 million, EPCG said in a press release.

The preliminary design for the environmental reconstruction of TPP Pljevlja has been drafted by Essen-based industrial group Steag Energy Services. The project implementation is scheduled to take place in the period 2019-2021, in what is to extend the operation of TPP Pljevlja for 20 years.

The reconstruction will ensure compliance with the requirements and adherence to the strictest environmental protection parameters as envisaged under the latest EU Decision 2017/1442.



Figure 8- Source: NGO Green Home



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Environmental reconstruction will result in a reduction of all emissions and products of coal combustion, as well as of chemical processes accompanying electricity generation below the limit values, all in line with the statutory regulations of Montenegro and the EU directives on emissions from coal-fired TPPs.

## ECOLOGICAL INCIDENT IN PLJEVLJA

Big environmental disaster on the Vezičnica river and the Čehotina river, and consequently a huge fish mortality rate, caused deep resentment of Pljevlja residents and the whole public. This environmental incident happened on Friday, 5 July.

After the notification by the Sport fishing Association, the competent inspectors went out to the field, established the facts and took samples of the fish and water. Montenegrin police have brought charges against Thermal Power Plant Pljevlja and four responsible persons, Mr Vladimir Šestović among them, on the grounds of the ecological incident and fish pestilence in the rivers Vezišnica and Čehotina.

ENV-NET initiatives

## THE ACTION WEEK FOR BALKAN RIVERS

The Action Week for Balkan Rivers is campaign which bring dam affected people from each Balkan's country to organize peaceful protest. The protest against sHPPs are organized from July 6 – 16, in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and Greece. The action week event is coordinated by NGO's RiverWatch and EuroNatur and cared out together with partner organizations in the Balkan country. In Montenegro protest was organized by Green Home in Podgorica, in front of Ministry of Economy. Protest include local communities from Berane (Vinicka river), Plav (Komoraca river), Bijelo Polje (Lještanica river) and Savnik (Bukovica river), also representatives of local NGO's from Montenegro. Earlier this year Green Home initiated the establishment of a moratorium on the construction of small hydropower plants in Montenegro, and we still do not get any answer. So again we demand moratorium on construction.

The idea for big protest in Podgorica came from round table on "Effective campaigns against the unplanned and unsustainable development of small hydropower plants" which is organized within the ENV.net project. Accordingly to that, Green Home use this opportunity to raise this protest to a higher international level.



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UDRUŽENJE  
GRAĐANA  
ZLATIBORSKI  
KRUG

Figure 9- Source: <http://www.zlatiborskikrug.org.rs/>

local community who will be engaged in planning and applying of activities related to sustainable development and environmental protection in Cajetina municipality.

## **Serbia: Project: „Model of circular economy in the service of environmental protection in the municipality of Cajetina“**

In the frame of the project „Model of circular economy in the service of environmental protection in the municipality of Cajetina“, supported through env.net sub-granting scheme, “Council for sustainable development and education of the municipality of Cajetina” was founded. The Council will operate under the Eco-school „Dimitrije Tucovic“, which will enable continuation even after the project would be finalized. The Council is consisted of representatives of local CSOs, educational institutions, media, business sector and local administration, aimed to connect and make network of all relevant stakeholders in



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During the Round table on circular economy principles, discussion regarding needs, real possibilities and challenges that Municipality of Cajetina faced with, are organized, which resulted in establishing the Council for sustainable development. In the following period one more Round table will be organized under this project, in order to define directions and rules for functioning of this Council. In February 2019, civil society „Zlatiborski krug“ (“Zlatibor circle”) started to implement 10-months project „Model of circular economy in the service of environmental protection in the municipality of Cajetina“, as financial supported to third parties for monitoring and evidence-based advocacy under the ENV.Net Project. The aim of the project is raising awareness of the citizens in Cajetina municipality on importance of sustainable development, in terms of circular economy, as a concept of responsibility towards environmental and resources.



Figure 10- Source: EASD, Serbia



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In a previous project period, different educational activities with educational institutions in the territory of Čajetina municipality were realized, based on the Memorandum of Understanding between CSO "Zlatiborski krug" and those institutions. Students of all primary and secondary schools in the municipality of Čajetina, as well as children from the kindergarten, had the opportunity to learn practically about the principles of the circular economy, through creative workshops where they produced eco-toys and instruments for the "circular band", using the recyclable materials. In each institution two workshops were carried, as it was planned. In order to make the process completed, both parents and staff of educational institutions were educated, in order to become more familiar with this theme. The lectures were organized for educators, teachers and professors, but also for directors and principals of institutions.

In addition, two competitions: artistic and literary, were implemented, on topics related to circular economy, for all children and youth in the municipality of Čajetina, and the works were presented during the awarding ceremony. All awarded children and youth get diplomas and prizes, provided by the CSO "Zlatiborski krug". Two Calls for collecting used textile materials and eco-toys made from natural materials are issued. In the meantime, two sewing machines that are located in the primary Eco-school "Dimitrije Tucović" in Čajetina are purchased, so that used textile material collected in the next period will be re-used to create new items for everyday use. In these workshops, students accompanied by their teachers, grandmothers and mothers, will take part.

The project envisages the establishment of the "Library of eco-toys" - collection of used toys and new toys made from natural materials. This initiative will encourage to "rent-a-toys", rather than buying new ones. Toys have already made in previous workshops will be placed in the future Library of eco-toys, which is located in the primary Eco-school "Dimitrije Tucović" in Čajetina.

The project will present achievements and examples of good practices, together with other ENV.net sub-grantees, during the annual conference of Eco-schools, which will be organized in October 2019, in Zlatibor. The Conference is titled: **"Principles of circular economy in the service of environmental protection"**.

All project activities are regularly covered by the media, by local and regional TV, Internet media and portals, as well as presented on web-site and social networks of CSO "Zlatiborski krug".



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## BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA:

City of Tuzla is dealing with significant problem of the environmental pollution. For many years inhabitants of the most endangered Tuzla's settlements Bukinje and Šićki Brod are warning on excessive pollution by the thermal-power plant, and in particular the disposal of slag, which would be even more in the near future, due to the construction of Block 7. City Tuzla Authorities proposed one of the possible and desirable solution for permanent and ecologically acceptable disposal of slag from Thermal-power plant Tuzla, by defining the location to underground areas at the Tetime site. In this way, they will resolve slags, and will not endanger the environment. Previously defined location was defended by citizens, who stated that the area of Lake Kop Šićki Brod should be place for recreation, various sports activities and tourist facilities.



Figure 11- Source: <https://bankwatch.org>



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## BELGIUM: WAITING FOR THE NEW COMMISSION: THE GREEN WAVE OR STEPS BACK?

The European elections saw the highest voter turnout in 20 years and significant gains for progressive causes, with environmental challenges and solutions occupying an unprecedented space in the political debate. However, the new EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen comes with no track record on environment and sustainability, and with the Commission's work programme still unclear, her commitment to protecting nature and the climate is untested. She has been nominated after marathon negotiations over the EU's top jobs, European heads of state have proposed Ursula von der Leyen as the next President of the European Commission.

Before speaking at the European Parliament, von der Leyen shared a 24-page document titled: 'A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe'.

The von der Leyen agenda includes a number of commitments to climate action including achieving a climate neutral EU by 2050, improving the EU's Emission Trading System and a carbon border tax. She also promised to end unanimous decision-making on climate and energy issues – a practice that recently allowed Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Estonia to block EU action. Alongside raised climate ambition von der Leyen promised a number of other important environmental measures, including:

- €1trn of sustainable finance investment and turning part of the European Investment Bank into Europe's climate bank
- A 2030 biodiversity strategy to stop biodiversity loss within five years
- A new circular economy action plan that addresses textiles and construction sectors
- A 'zero-pollution' target delivered through a cross-cutting strategy to protect citizens' health from environmental degradation and pollution
- A "farm to fork" strategy on sustainable food



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While much of the content of von der Leyen's political agenda has been welcomed by green groups, questions remain about the details of some of her proposals and the extent of her commitment to others. Von der Leyen has also promised to use the EU's budget to make sure that countries follow EU rules, which could provide crucial in ensuring the proper implementation and enforcement of EU environmental laws. The final result saw von der Leyen win the support of 383 members. The Parliament confirmed the candidate President, now we will wait for a new Commission and a solid programme that will address voters' environmental concerns, and convince public, that the new leadership of the EU will seriously address key issues of climate change, degraded biodiversity and the EU enlargement.

## GREENING THE EU BUDGET

The revision of the upcoming EU budget, known as the EU's 'Multiannual Financial Framework' – or MFF for short, will decide how EU money is spent in the next seven years. The Commission wants to increase the money available to address the climate crisis from the current 20% to 25% of the new budget – that means from €206 billion in previous years to €320 billion for 2021-2027.

But that's not enough, according to the European Parliament and NGOs, who have proposed respectively a 30% and 40% minimum spending on projects supporting climate neutral energy and business models. The Parliament and NGOs also support the exclusion of support to fossil fuels from the budget. The negotiations are ongoing and EU governments are expected to reach an agreement on this by the end of the year, but they have so far delayed talks and shown much less urgency than the Parliament and Commission.

Environmental groups, backed by financial analysts, want lawmakers to redirect investments towards cleaner energy, transport, agriculture and business models. Any agreement will have to clearly spell out what percentage of the overall budget will be allocated to the climate crisis; how much money each government should put in the pot; and clearer guidelines as to what the money are going to be spent on and what definitely shouldn't be spent on.



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This last point is expected to be the subject of a heated debate, as the largest single share of the EU budget is currently used controversially to support unsustainable agriculture. Intensive farming is responsible for 10% of the total carbon emissions in the EU and is the third biggest source of primary particulate matter – a harmful air pollutant. NGOs have called for public money to be used exclusively to keep food production at safe levels that our planet can handle and to support farming that's based on sustainable practices.

All eyes are now on Finland, which is holding the rotating presidency of the EU Council and will coordinate work on behalf of all governments to come up with a final budget proposal before the end of the year. The government has just announced it will go climate neutral by 2035, spurring hope that an ambitious deal could be struck soon.

## WHEN GREEN GROWTH IS NOT ENOUGH

In recent years, the concept of green economic growth, i.e. the expansion of the economy without an accompanying increase in environmental harm, has gained political acceptance. However, the idea that this policy alone is enough to deal with the environmental challenges we face appears to be founded on little to no scientific basis.

The empirical data and theoretical literature is both overwhelmingly clear and sobering: there is no evidence supporting the existence of a decoupling of economic growth from environmental pressures on anywhere near the scale needed to deal with environmental breakdown. This is the conclusion of the new report 'Decoupling debunked: Evidence and arguments against green growth as a sole strategy for sustainability'.

The authors also explain that there are at least seven reasons to be sceptical about the occurrence of sufficient decoupling in the future: rising energy expenditures, rebound effects, problem shifting, the underestimated impact of services, limited recycling potential, insufficient and inappropriate technological change, and cost shifting.

To be clear: the fact that decoupling on its own, i.e. without addressing the issue of economic growth, has not been and will not be sufficient to reduce environmental pressures to the required extent is not a reason to oppose decoupling (in the literal sense of separating the environmental pressures curve from the GDP curve) or the measures that achieve decoupling. Quite the contrary, without many such measures the situation would be far worse. In other words, decoupling shifts us from racing down the fast lane to cruising along the slow lane, which is an improvement. But to get off the highway, we need to do more.



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The true cause for concern is the predominant focus among policy-makers on green growth as a panacea, with this focus being based on the flawed assumption that sufficient decoupling can be achieved through increased efficiency without limiting economic production and consumption.

## ***Sustained growth is not sustainable!***

This scientific finding is strongly at odds with the eighth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG8), which aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth”. While almost all SDGs have very important goals and targets that humanity desperately needs to achieve, SDG8’s pursuit of the economic growth is undermining the possibility of achieving the others.

The question now is whether governments will be willing to act upon the best available scientific evidence when they review SDG8 on 10 July in New York. Countries such as Finland have already reacted to this contradiction within the SDGs by downgrading the importance of GDP growth in their plan to achieve the SDGs, but the EU as a bloc has yet to admit that there is a problem with target 1 in SDG8.

Researchers have some ideas about the truly sustainable way forward. The main conclusion of ‘Decoupling debunked’ is that increasing efficiency only makes sense if it is part of a wider pursuit of sufficiency, which is the direct downscaling of economic production and consumption in those sectors where it is needed most. In the view of the authors and based on the best available scientific evidence, only sufficiency strategies respect the EU’s ‘precautionary principle’.

The report ‘Decoupling Debunked. Evidence and arguments against green growth as a sole strategy for sustainability’ was produced by the EEB, with the support of the German Alliance for Nature Conservation (Deutscher Naturschutzring), in the context of the EEB’s work on economic transition in the context of the Make Europe Sustainable for All (MESA) project. It was released on 9 July and can be downloaded at <https://eeb.org/library/decoupling-debunked/>



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## KOSOVO: WHEN GREEN GROWTH IS NOT ENOUGH

During July 2019, the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Rural Development, Environment and Spatial Planning of the Assembly of Kosovo held two regular meetings, where, among other topics, were discussed:

1. Review of the Draft Law on Biocidal Products
2. Report of the Minister of Environment regarding hydropower plants and quarries

### **Review of the Draft Law on Biocidal Products**

The Kosovo Assembly Environment Committee has reviewed the Draft Law on Biocidal Products and Amendments Proposed by the Working Group, established by the Committee on the Analysis of the Draft Law.

In consultation with the Ministry of Environment, the Commission held 3 working meetings, where the draft law was reviewed and 24 amendments were prepared, which were proposed to the Commission. The Commission, with 9 votes to no, abstained, approved the amendments and decided that the draft law would be forwarded to the standing committees for discussion and then to the Assembly for approval.

### **Report of the Minister of MESP Mr. Fatmir Matoshi regarding hydropower plants and quarries;**

On 08.07.2019, the Committee on the Environment of the Assembly of Kosovo invited the Minister of Environment, Mr. Fatmir Matoshi, in relation to hydropower plants and quarries. In addition to the MPs, the meeting was also attended by residents of the areas where hydropower plants are being built.

According to the Minister, some hydropower plants are planned to be built by the company MATKOS GROUP, in the territory of the municipality of Strpce. Some of the hydropower plants are in the construction phase, while others are in the phase of completing the documentation and then starting the works.



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For all these investments the economic operators have been provided with relevant documentation by the Ministry of Environment, such as Environmental and Water Consents, while regarding the construction permits the operator has been provided with them by the Municipality of Strpce. Public debates on investments were held in 2013 and 2014. Currently the works are in the final stages and the Ministry cannot intervene because the investors who are working will certainly seek compensation.

Citizens present at the meeting objected to the Minister, offering facts that no public meeting with residents regarding investment and river interference. According to them, due to the construction of the hydropower plants, the water has decreased in the Lepenc River and many fish have been found dead. According to residents, agriculture is dependent on the river and about 100 hectares of raspberries planted are irrigated by the river.

## **ENTRY INTO FORCE DECISION ON TREATMENT OF ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS**

The Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning, Fatmir Matoshi through a press conference has made public the entry into force of Administrative Instructions deriving from the Law on Treatment of Illegal Constructions. The Ministry of Environment has developed 5 administrative guidelines that regulate specific aspects of the process of dealing with illegal construction in Kosovo.

"So today begins the implementation of the law on the treatment of 352 thousand illegal constructions, most of which fall into categories 1 and 2, for which the local level is responsible, while for category 3 responsible for the process treatment of illegal constructions is the Ministry of Environment", stated Minister Matoshi.

According to the Minister. With these guidelines there will be cheaper taxes, where for the first category will be 1 euro per square meter and for the second category will be 2 euro per square meter.

Following the entry into force of these guidelines, Minister Matoshi said that there will be meetings with the mayors and respective departments and there will be an information campaign for the citizens of Kosovo on this process.



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