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ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS
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Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development

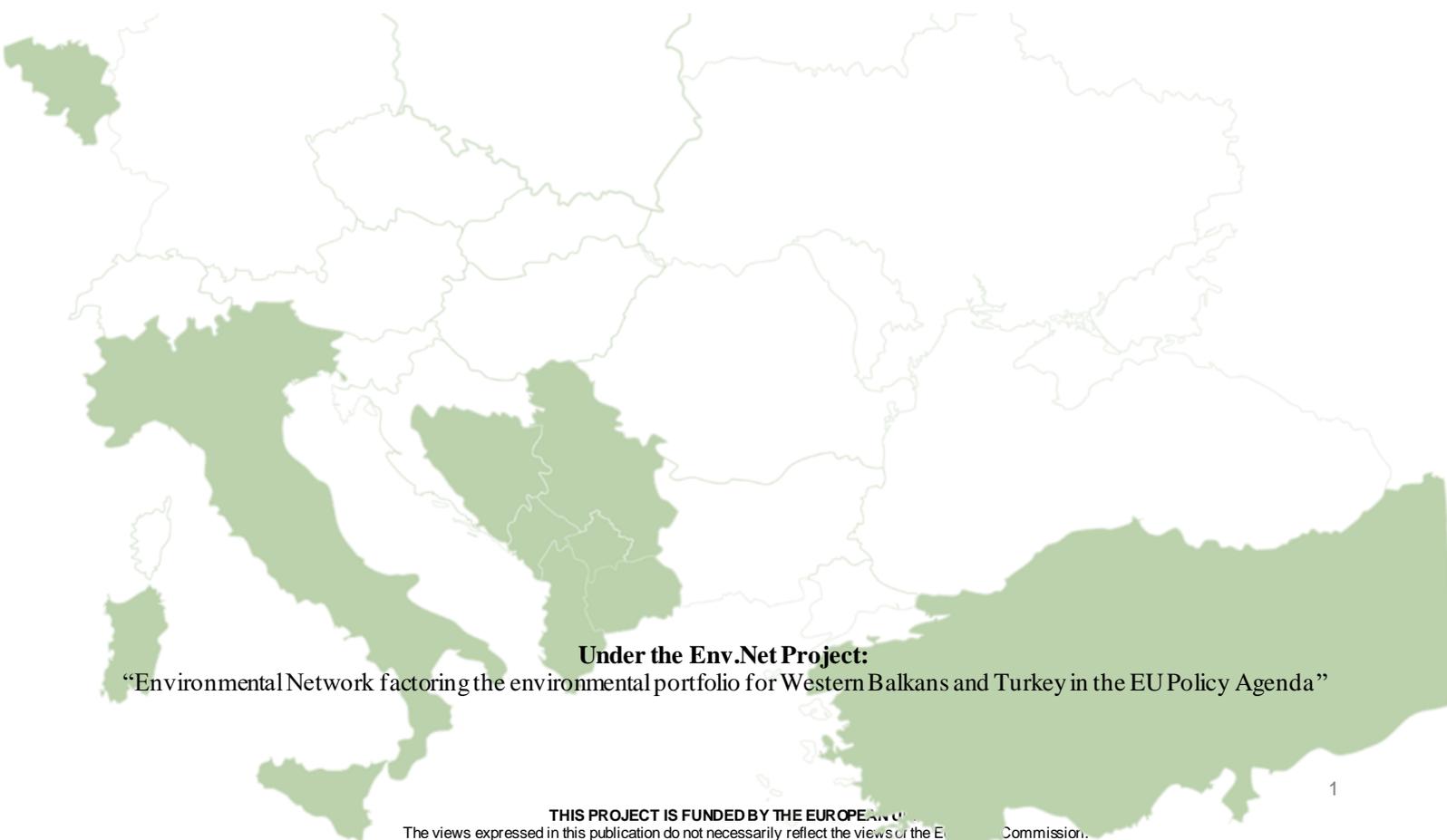
(Acronym: **EASD**)

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December 2020

Country Specific Report - Serbia

Contribution for the 2020 EC Annual Report *Snapshots on Chapter 15 & 27*, related to ENV.net3 thematic activities for Country



Under the Env.Net Project:

“Environmental Network factoring the environmental portfolio for Western Balkans and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda”

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1. Introduction: context 2020

To achieve this, in 2020 the European Commission presented the **European Green Deal**¹, the most ambitious package of measures that should enable European citizens and businesses to benefit from sustainable green transition. The policy areas covered by the EU Green Deal are climate change, clean energy, circular economy and sustainable industry, sustainable mobility, environmental-friendly food system, biodiversity, zero-pollution and a toxic-free environment.

The EU will support its immediate neighbours so that the transition for Europe can be effective. At the Zagreb Summit on 6 May 2020, EU and Western Balkans leaders agreed that deepening regional economic integration has to be a prominent part of recovery efforts of the Western Balkans. From this perspective, **the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans** is the instrument that will bring the European Green Deal closer to the Western Balkan countries. **The Green Agenda intend to mirror the European Green Deal** focusing decarbonisation, circular economy, biodiversity preservation, and depollution.

This report² focuses on ENV.net3 targeted activities in Serbia in 2020 (and do not cover other subchapters). The Report represents continuation of previous Reports made by EASD in 2018 and 2019, following methodology presented in that Report: EC Annual Report 2020³, and some relevant official documents, like Screening Reports⁴ and documents available through process of preparation of Position Paper for Chapter 27 - **Serbia presented its Negotiating Position for Chapter 27 to EC in January 2020 and now waiting for COM to prepare Draft EU common position**. For Chapter 27, we take in account NGOs activities made by Coalition 27 in preparing “shadow report”⁵. In reporting progress, we rely on: - monitoring of implementation of NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision, 2018⁶, as well as - research and activities achieved within ENV.net3 regional project: “Circular economy in Serbia – process started”⁷, Reflection paper on air quality data for Serbia, Position paper on COVID 19 and waste management, Information paper on meaning of Cluster “Green agenda and sustainable connectivity” for Serbia⁸, 2020 Spotlight Report on Circular Economy in Serbia, EASD reflection on EU enlargement cluster methodology — Chapter 27 and clustering, “Ebart” Media Achieve analysis and contribution made through the project EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey (highlight: participating NGOs agreed that **transparency needs to be increased**).

This report is complementary with other available relevant reports, covering only selected issues of interest for ENV.net3 regional project.

¹ See: *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions*, COM(2019) 640 from 11 December 2019, at https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en (accessed January 2020).

² Prepared by Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development Team of Experts

³ EC Serbia 2020 Report, available at

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf

⁴ Chapter 15 Screening Report, available at

http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/Skrining/screening_report_ch_15.pdf

Chapter 27 Screening Report, available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/screening_report_serbia_-_chapter_27_-_environment.pdf, and

http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/skrining/screening_report_chapter_27.pdf

⁵ Available at <https://www.koalicija27.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/report-2020.pdf>

⁶ NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision, Available at

http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/npaa/third_revision_npaa_18.pdf

⁷ <http://ambassadors-env.com/en/circular-economy-in-serbia/>

⁸ Prepared in November 2020 and based on analyses provided by ENV.net subgrant project Refresh 4EU

2. Obligations of Membership

2.1. Energy (*Under Chapter 15*)

According to the European Commission's latest annual assessment of the implementation of reforms in the country, for Serbia *limited progress* in the area of energy was marked. Some ENV.net related highlights of assessment concerning Chapter 15: Energy are as follows:

- advance on green energy transition: strengthen human resources capacity and promote investment in energy efficiency and in substitution of coal power plants with gas and renewables, implement consumption-based metering and billing and move towards cost-reflective electricity prices. In the other words, it is need in advancing on a green energy transition, away from coal, and that needs to become a priority. Also, implementing the Paris Agreement, including by adopting a comprehensive climate strategy and law, consistent with the EU 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and well-integrated into all relevant sectors, and developing a National Energy and Climate Plan in line with Energy Community are obligations.
- Awareness-raising activities need to be stepped up. Serbia needs to invest much more into the transition towards green energy, including upgrading outdated infrastructure in order to reduce pollution.

This chapter is with opening benchmarks; Serbia working on fulfilment of opening benchmarks.

2.1.1. Renewable Energy

On renewable energy, Serbia further progressed on transposing EU acquis into its legislation. Serbia adopted several pieces of secondary legislation on bio-fuels but implementation is pending. Bio-fuels are not yet used in the transport sector. The latest data for 2018 show that renewable sources accounted for a share of 20.32% of gross final energy consumption, which is well below Serbia's national renewables target set at 27% for 2020. Serbia needs to intensify its efforts to switch from feed-in tariffs to an auction-based scheme. Implementing legislation to enable prosumers to interact with the energy market should be adopted. Any further development of hydropower should be in line with EU environmental acquis.

Degradation of the natural habitats for mini hydropower plants construction is continuing, although analyses and recommendation of expert institutions are clearly indicating that mini hydro power plants shouldn't be constructed in the protected areas. Local citizens and CSOs at the number of such locations are showing commitment not to allow small hydro on their rivers. EASD continued to support such activities related to protection of local natural resources.

In 2020, EASD continuous with partnership with French institute in Serbia/Belgrade, which provided exhibition and practical models on Renewable Energy Resources, through bigger project Climate Caravan. More than 20 local communities hosted and exhibition, with participation of more than 1000 students and citizens.

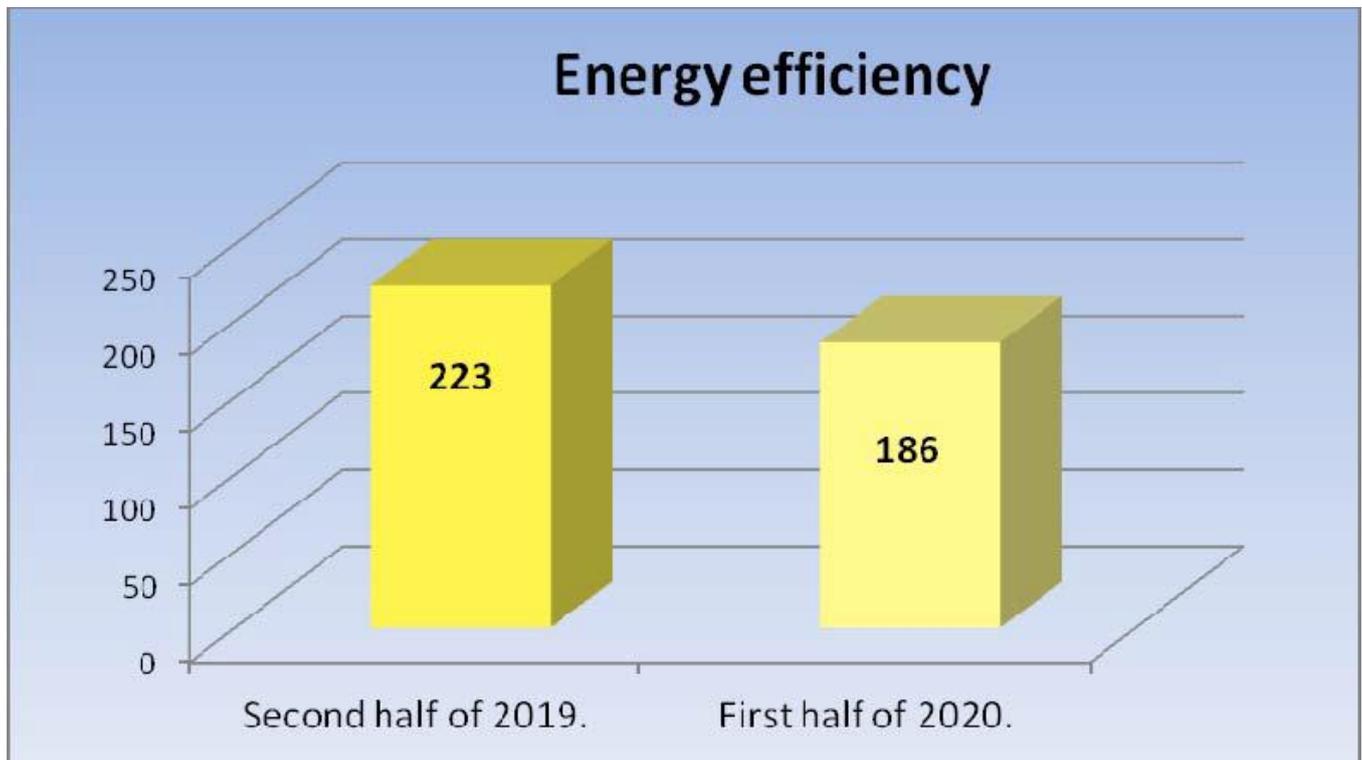
2.1.2. Energy Efficiency

Serbia achieved some progress in energy efficiency by adopting rules on energy labelling. Serbia still needs to adopt amendments to the law on efficient use of energy, improve energy audits and energy management, and implement requirements in the field of eco-design and related secondary legislation.

From 2018, EASD started energy efficiency advocacy, in partnership with "Elektroprivreda Srbije" and continue efforts to promote energy efficiency measures among Eco-school Serbia network in 2020, with new partner French institute in Serbia. More than 20 local communities and 100 Eco-school, with

participation of more than 2000 students, received workshops and printed material with directions how to deal with energy efficiency in daily life and work.

ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020. by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “energy efficiency” appear in below presented numbers:



As shown, the trend is visible, but more awareness rising and knowledge-based activities are needed.

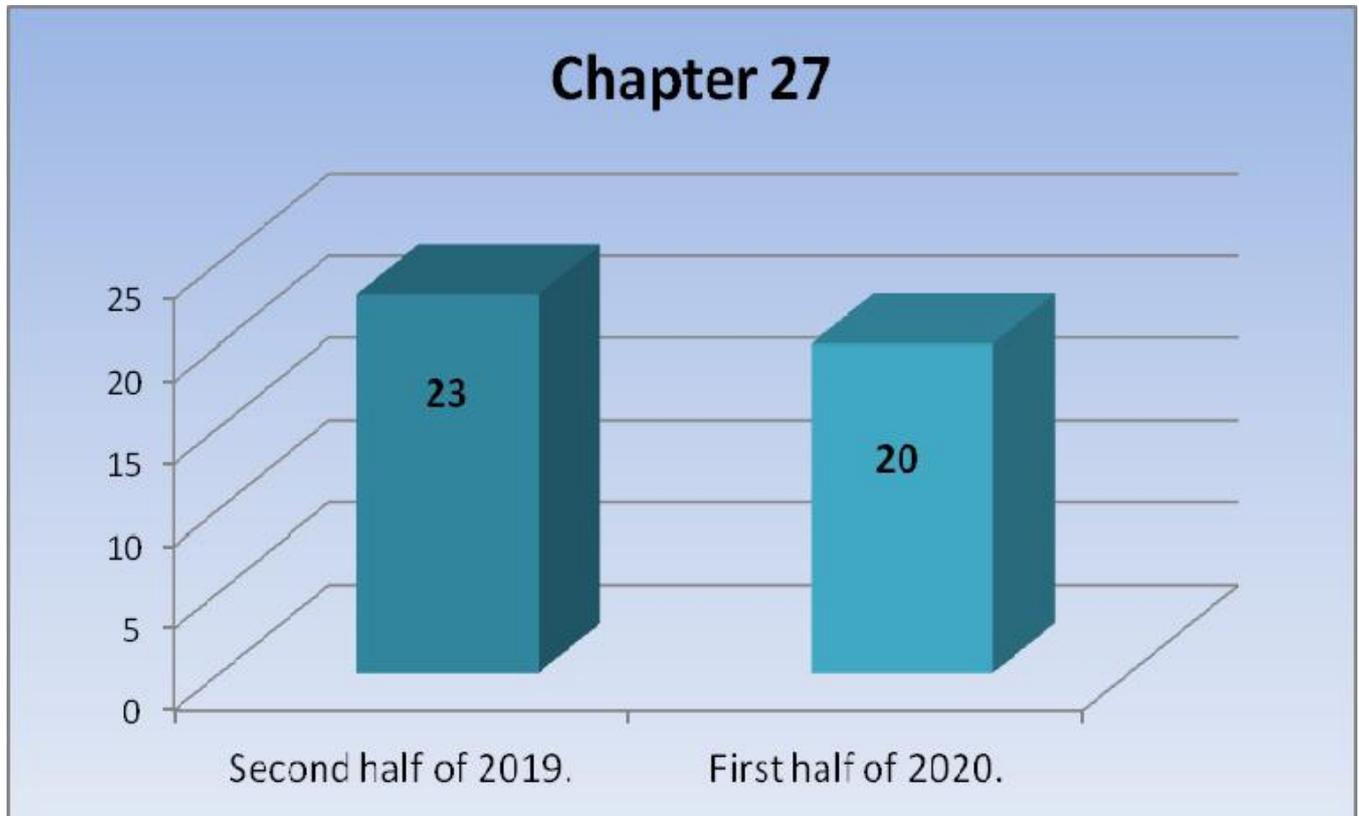
2.2. Environment (*Under Chapter 27*)

Some facts regarding Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Change), are following: Explanatory meeting hold 15-19 September 2014; Bilateral meeting hold 17-21 November 2014; Received EC Opinion – Screening Report at the very end of 2016 without benchmarks. **Negotiation Position for Chapter 27** has been finalized at the end of 2019, consisting of number of DSIPs (Directive Specific Implementation plans), to support position, and **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) has a responsibility to prepare a national State of the Environment report on a yearly basis, since 2006 (in accordance with Articles 76 and 77 of the Law on Environmental Protection). The Government and Committee for Environment of Serbian Parliament approve the latest Report for 2018 in December 2019. Although legal framework is advanced (EU directives transposed), **implementation of laws is “too little to slow”.**

To highlight that it is the chapter without opening benchmarks; Serbia is now (October 2020) waiting for COM to prepare Draft EU common position.

Serbia has achieved **some level of preparation** in the area of environment and climate change. Overall, Serbia made **limited progress** in the past year, mainly on strategic planning. The 2019 recommendations remain valid. Serbia should considerably step up ambitions towards a green transition.

ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “Chapter 27” appear in below presented numbers for the period second half of 2019 – the first half of 2020:

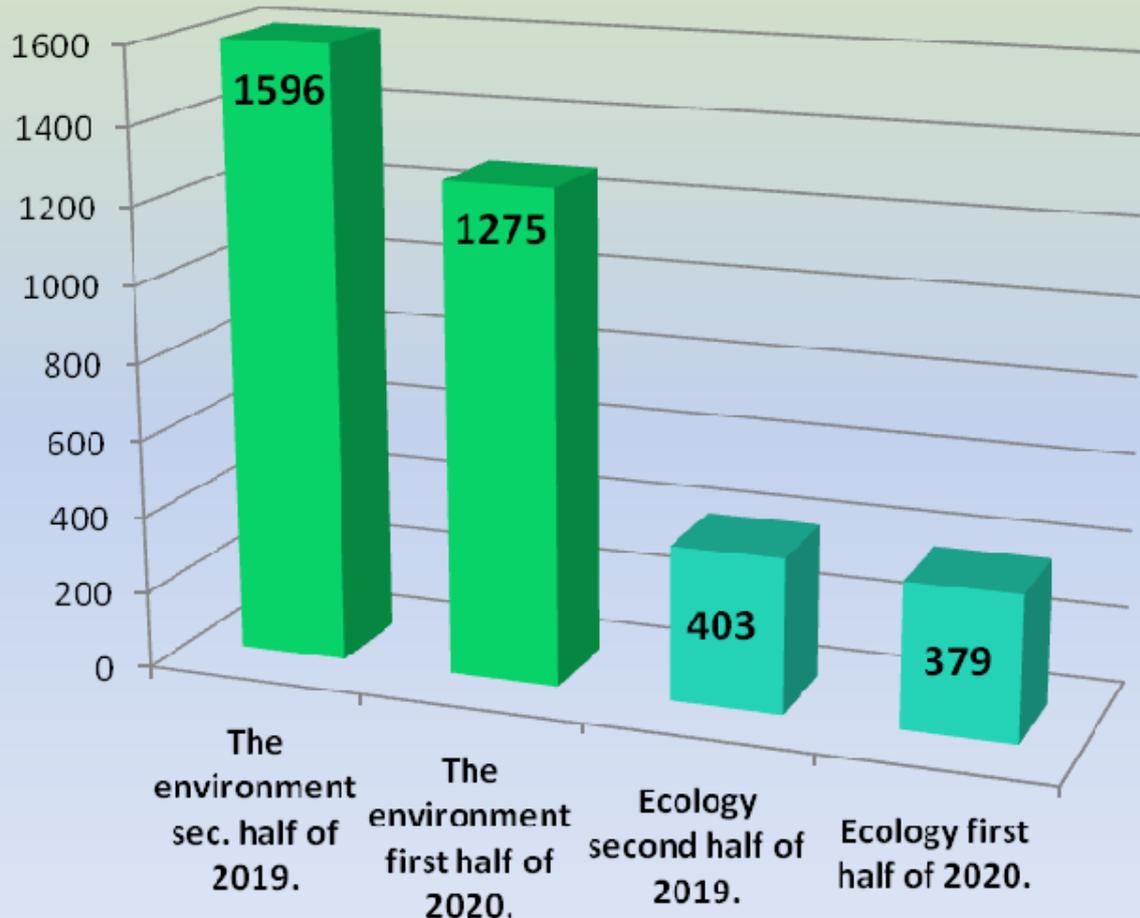


This research is the base of the EASD paper **Environmental Communication: Media Archive Reports as a Participant Science Tool**, accepted to be presented at International Scientific Conference ICCM 2021- International Conference on Communication and Management⁹, to be held in August 2021 in Athens, Greece (with acknowledgement to ENV.net project).

At the same time, ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “Environment/Ecology” appear in below presented numbers:

⁹ <https://coming.gr/iccm2021/>

The environment / Ecology



2.2.1. Water Quality and Management

The level of alignment with the EU acquis on water quality is moderate.

EASD activities presented in 2.1.1. could also consider in this thematic issue.

2.2.2. Climate Change

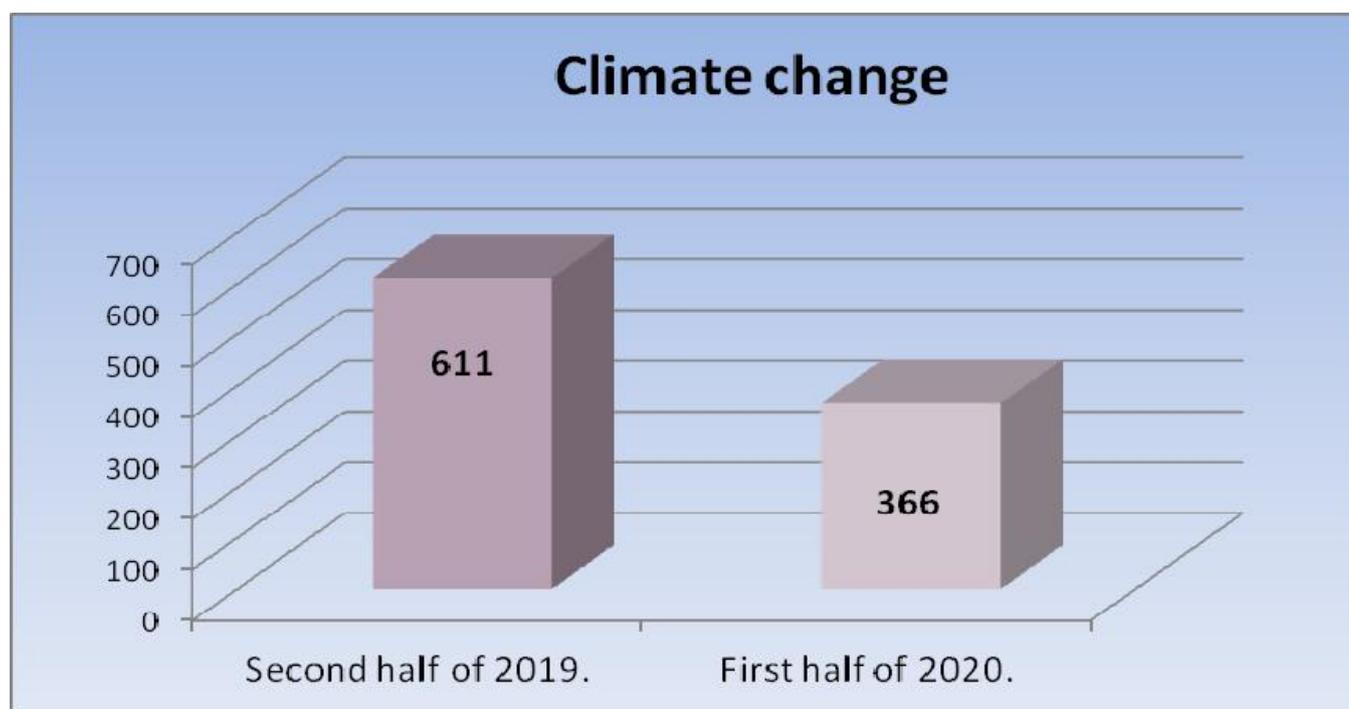
Serbia has some level of preparation on climate change, but implementation is at a very early stage. Developments in 2020 largely came to a standstill, reflecting a lack of political consensus about the urgency to act. Serbia has still not adopted the climate law it had prepared as the draft in 2018. The adoption and implementation of a climate strategy and action plan, which is consistent with the EU 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and which addresses adaptation to climate change, is paramount for Serbia's future low carbon development. Draft National Climate Change (Low Carbon Development) Strategy and its Action Plan passed several rounds of the consultation process, including CSOs community, is prepared by IPA 2014 supported project¹⁰. Serbia needs to invest much more into the transition towards green energy, including upgrading outdated infrastructure in order to reduce pollution.

¹⁰ <http://www.serbiacclimatestrategy.eu/>

The alignment of legislation on monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the EU emissions trading system and Effort Sharing Regulation is pending.

Awareness-raising activities need to be stepped up.

ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “climate change” appear in below presented numbers compared periods of the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020:



In the NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision, 2018¹¹, planned:

Law	NPAA	Achieved until October/November 2020
Law on Climate Change	2018/II	NOT ADOPTED (Public widely consulted in 2018)

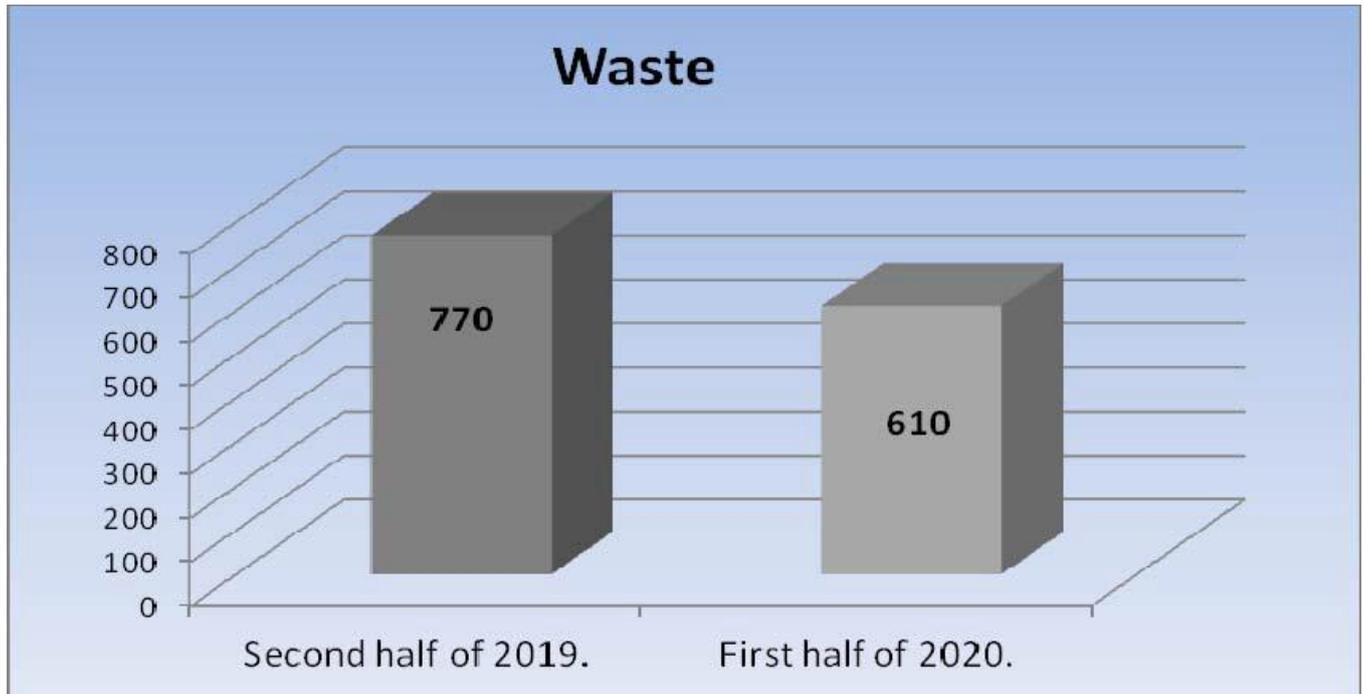
2.2.3. Waste Management

Regarding **waste management**, Serbia has a good level of alignment with the EU *acquis* in waste management, however the implementation remains at an early stage.

The proportion of recycled waste in overall waste management is still low, e.g. 3% for municipal waste. Serbia needs to redouble efforts to close its non-compliant landfills and invest in waste reduction, separation and recycling.

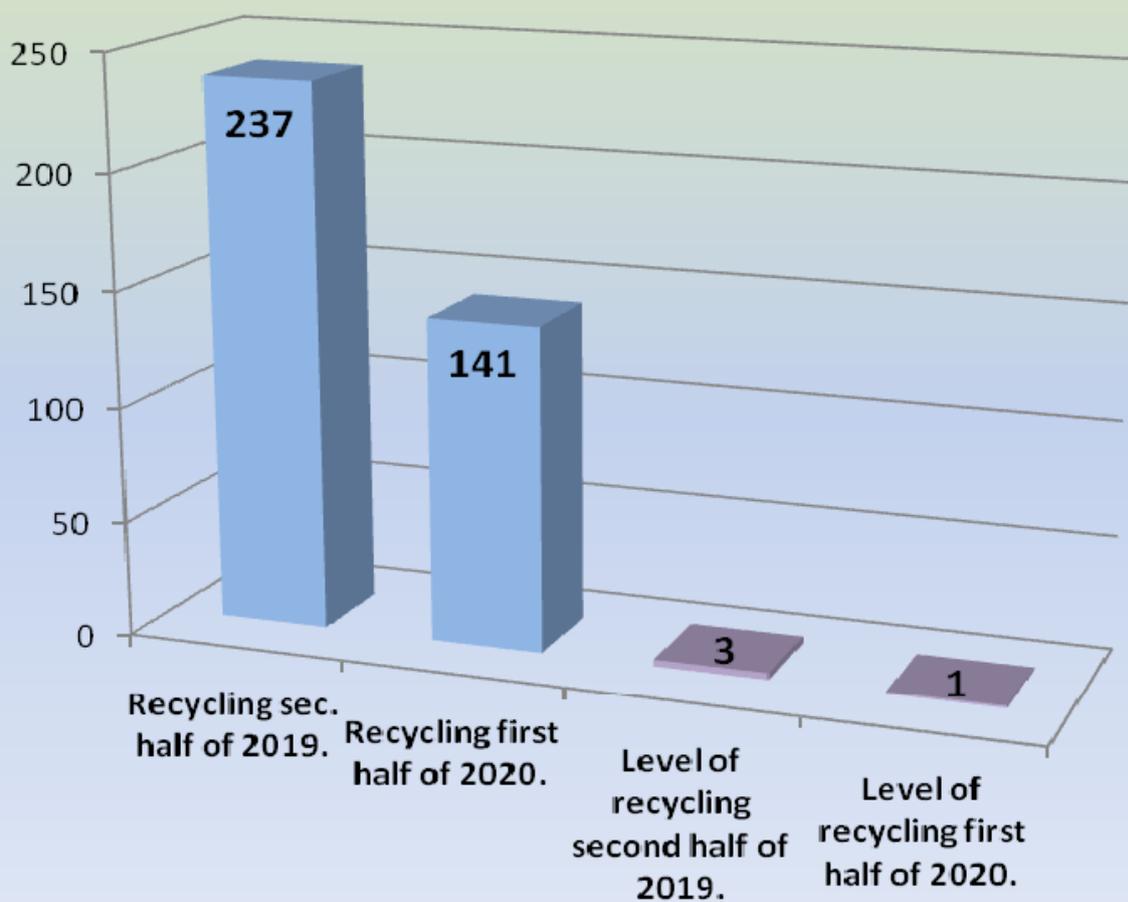
¹¹ NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision , Available at http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/npaa/third_revision_npaa_18.pdf

ENV.net3 research conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “waste” appears in below presented numbers, compared second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020

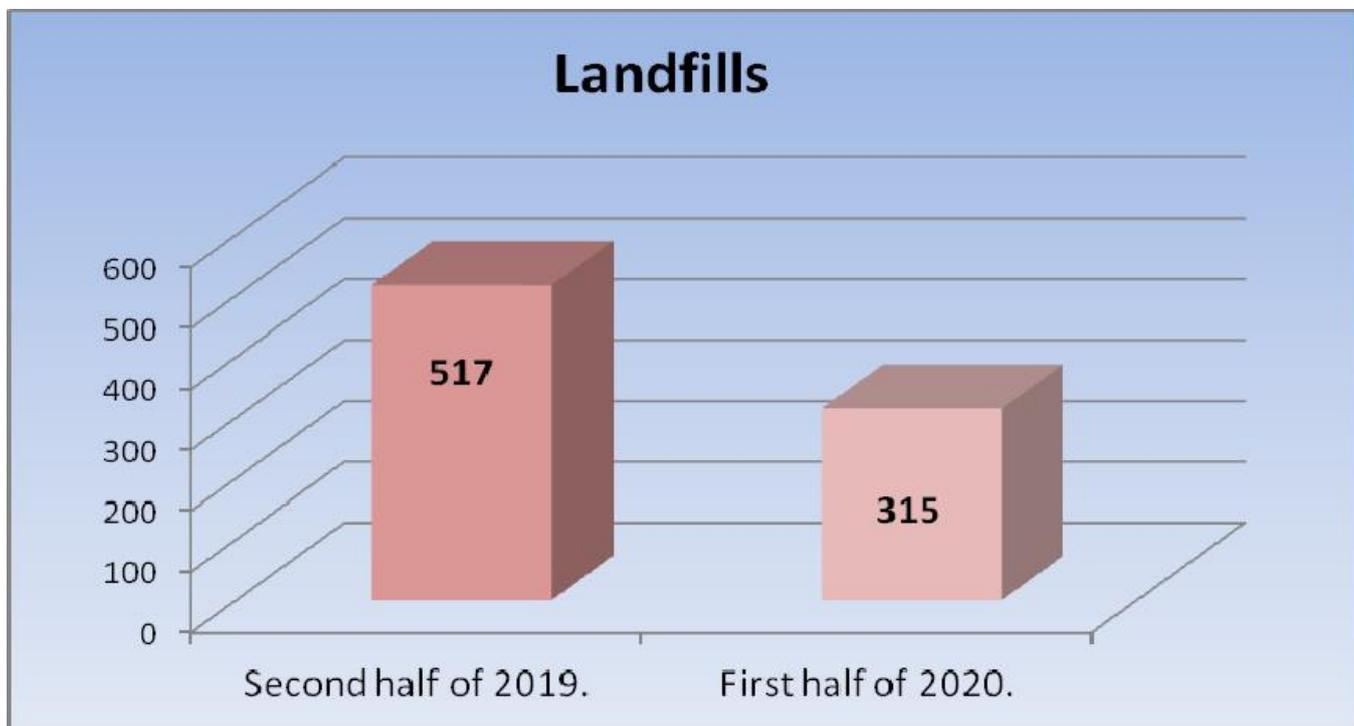


ENV.net3 research conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “recycling/level of recycling” appear in below presented numbers for the period second half of 2019 compared with the first half of 2020

Recycling / Level of recycling

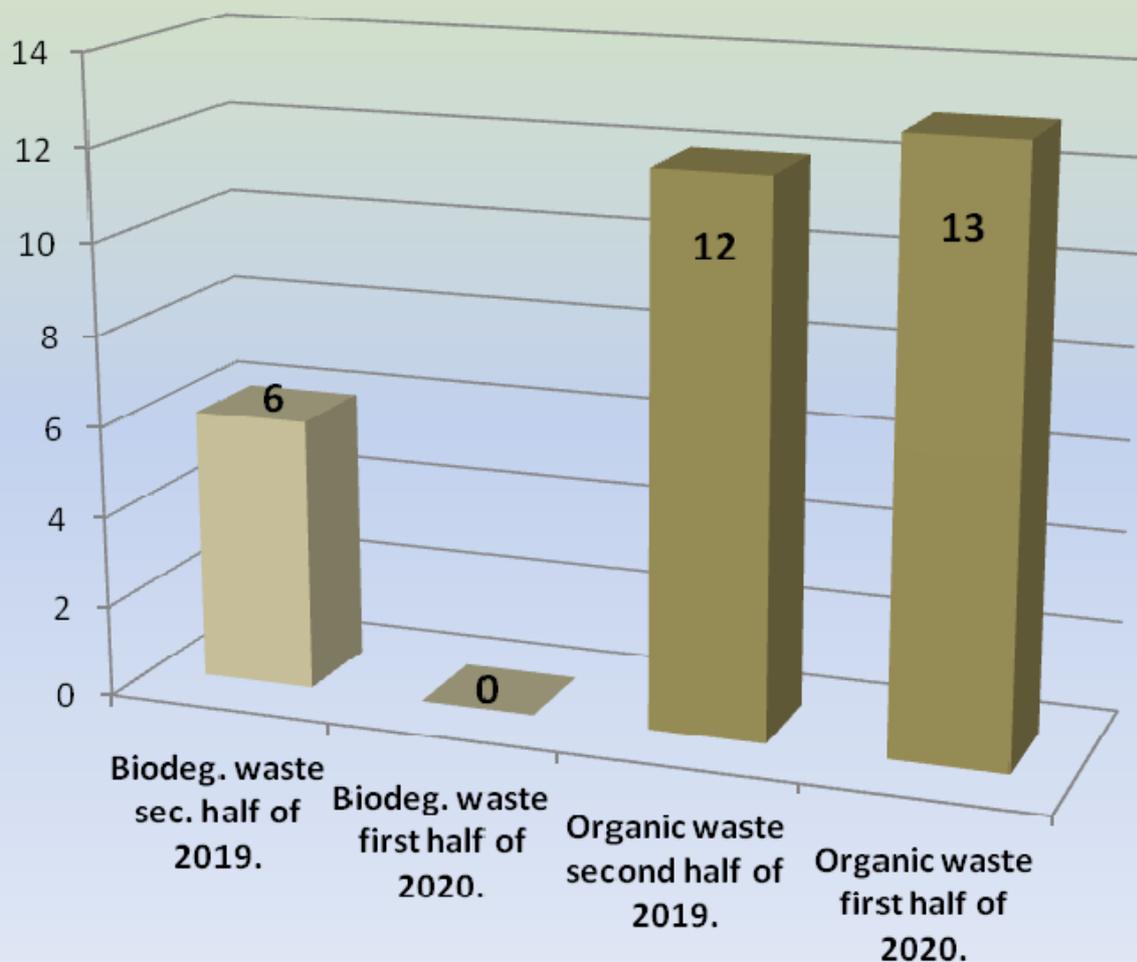


ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive "Ebart" shows that in written media in Serbia the term "Landfills (in Serbian "deponije")" appear in below presented numbers for two periods: second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020.



ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive "Ebart" shows that in written media in Serbia the term "biodegradable waste/organic waste" appear in below presented numbers, compared periods of the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020

Biodegradable waste / Organic waste



In the NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision, 2018¹², the Law amending the Law on Waste Management was planned for the beginning of 2019; however, adoption is postponed to 2021:

Law	NPAA	Achieved until October/November 2020
Law amending the Law on Waste Management	2019/II	A draft version of the new Law on Waste Management, has been prepared; no evidence on public consultation

Draft new /updated National Waste Management Strategy, with the National Waste Management Plan and National Waste Prevention Program, is developing under Twining project "EU support to the development of a strategic framework in the field of waste management". This project includes also development of a set of economic instruments for the implementation of European solid municipal waste regulations. Related DSIPs (Directive Specific Implementation Plan) are prepared during the process of preparation of Negotiation Position for Chapter 27.

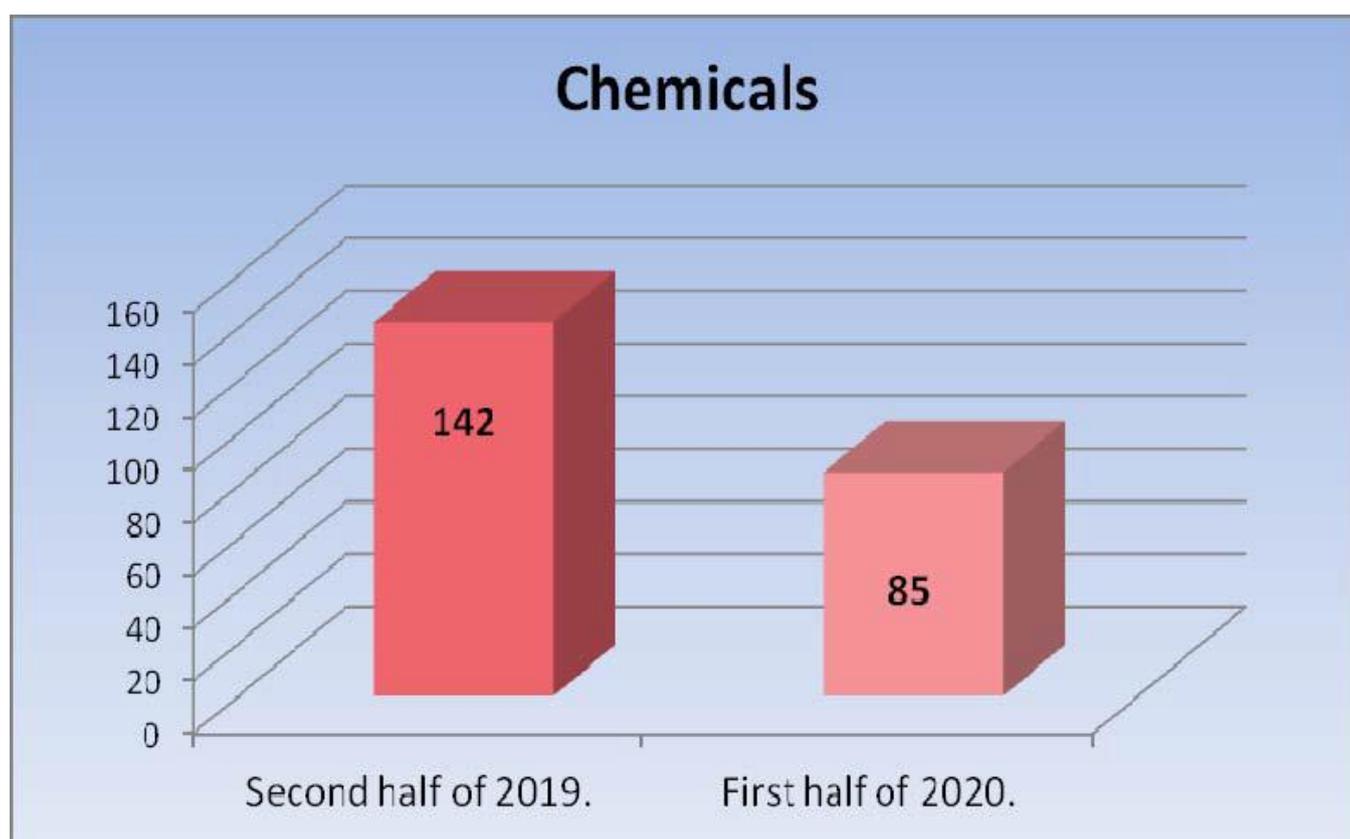
¹² NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ACQUIS-Third Revision , Available at http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/npaa/third_revision_npaa_18.pdf

Due the fact that EASD is committed to information/knowledge based advocacy, we just follow, but not took part, in public consultation related to the Belgrade landfill and the construction of a waste to energy facility (expected to start in 2020).

2.2.4. Chemicals (and GMO's¹³) and Animal Welfare

The Law on Chemicals and Law on Biocidal Products along with the relevant bylaws represent an advanced system of chemicals management, which is significantly harmonized with EU regulations. Serbia has a high level of alignment with the EU acquis on chemicals. Serbia opened an online platform for registering biocidal products. Serbia needs to boost its administrative capacity to implement legislation in these areas, and ensure proper monitoring of persistent organic pollutants.

ENV.net3 research, conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “Chemicals” appear in below presented numbers, compared two periods: the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020



EASD participated promoting end amalgam use; in 2020 activity have the quotation in the European Commission's Report and recommends the phase out of amalgam (therefore the European Commission will propose a legislation in 2022 for a phase out on a date specific, earlier than 2030).

2.2.5. Circular Economy

Term “circular economy” is not mentioned in 2020 EC Report. Since 2018 CSOs in Serbia started to raise this issue¹⁴. Serbia is implementing some initiatives that support the circular economy.

¹³ In Serbia, GMO's are not part of Chapter 27

¹⁴ Under the ENV.net3 project umbrella, and also look at <http://eukonvent.org/> <http://eukonvent.org/category/vesti/> <http://eukonvent.org/category/saopstenja/>

Ex-ante analysis of effects related (future) circular economy policy is prepared, through project “Policy and Legal Advice Centre – PLAC III, EuropeAid/139295/DH/SER/RS).

In 2020, Serbian Ministry for Environment, supported by UNDP, published “A Roadmap for circular economy in Serbia”¹⁵. The purpose of the Roadmap is to encourage production through application of circular business models, to motivate industry to create new work posts and to advance doing business by detecting innovative, sustainable solutions on the market.

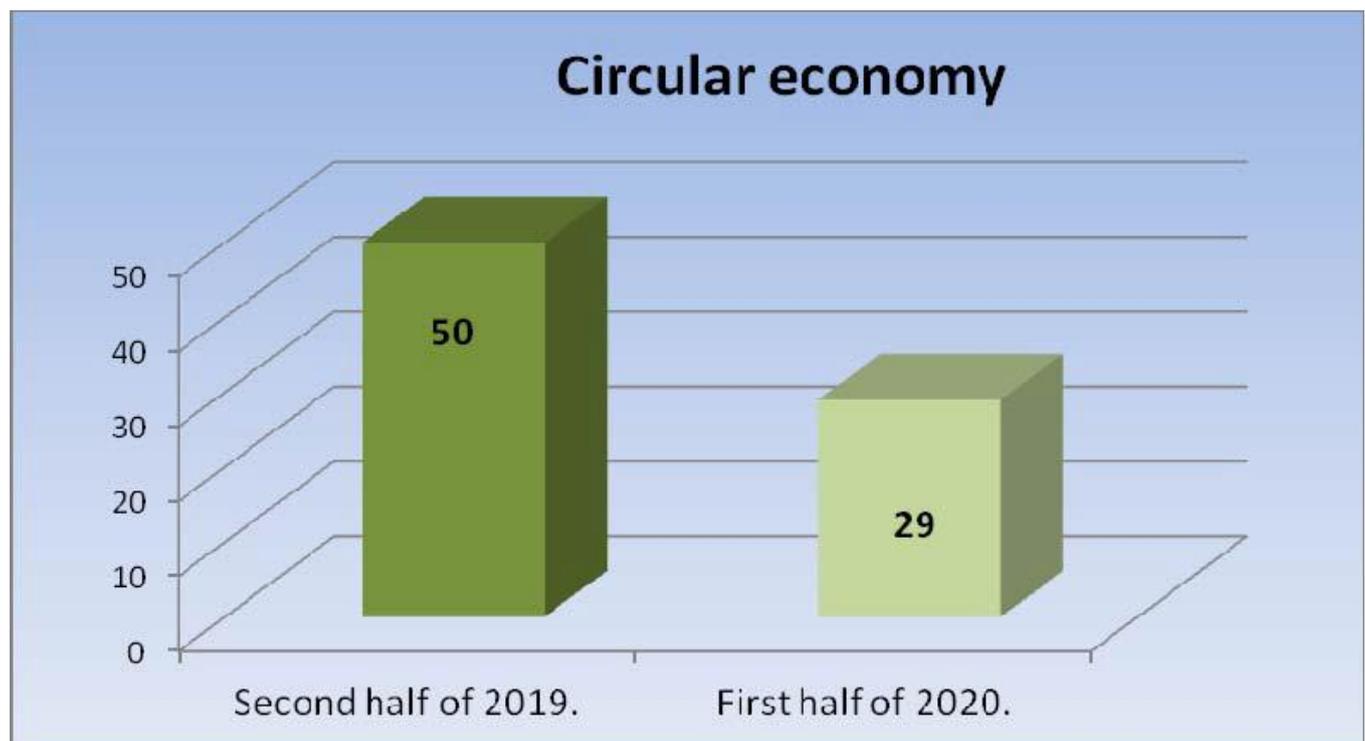
Circular economy concept in Serbia is still in its early stage.

In 2020, ENV.net3 research related circular economy¹⁶ is presented at EurAsia Waste Management Symposium 2020, Istanbul, Turkey, October 2020.

To recall that ENV.net3 prepares and published at the end of 2019 publication “Circular economy in Serbia – process started”¹⁷. Progress regarding circular economy at EU and UN levels, as well as current situation in Serbia, with references to all projects and initiatives, past and ongoing, are presented in publication.

Above publication is receiving great attention. It is posted on Researchgate, and as on 31 October 2020 have: 309 reads of publication in Serbian, and 124 reads of publication in English.

In research conducted in 2020 by EASD and implemented by Media archive “Ebart” shows that in written media in Serbia the term “Circular economy” appear in below presented numbers for two periods: second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020



¹⁵ https://www.ekologija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/razno/2020/FINAL_202004020_roadmap%20SRBIJA.pdf

¹⁶ <http://ambassadors-env.com/en/files/ABSTRACT-Circular-Economy-goes-beyond-Waste-Management-2020.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://ambassadors-env.com/en/circular-economy-in-serbia/>

In 2020, EASD performed some milestone activities related circular economy in Serbia. These include:

- workshops through Eco-schools Serbia network, about can recycling, project “Every can counts in Eco-schools”
- development of students entrepreneurship among children with special needs, based on circular economy principles and supported by the local community the City of Sombor.

2.2.6. *Wildlife and Nature Protection*

EASD activities presented in 2.1.1, could be also considered in this thematic issue.

2.2.7. *Air pollution*

In the field of air quality, Serbia has a good level of alignment with the EU acquis. However, Serbia needs to speed up implementation of legislation and air quality plans. While an air quality monitoring network is in place and is being extended, and real-time data are available, the monitoring of air quality still needs to be considerably strengthened.

Due the fact that Belgrade and some other cities is having air pollution among the most polluted places in the world, in 2020 EASD perform some analysis related air pollution and COVID19 circumstances. To note that 11 agglomerations in Serbia have air pollution above the limits: Belgrade, Subotica, Pančevo, Užice, Smederevo, Kosjeric, Valjevo, Kraljevo, Sremska Mitrovica, Kragujevac and Niš. Five of these cities do not have air quality management plans in place. Pollution induced by the Kostolac B thermal power plant needs to be addressed as a priority. Alignment with EU legislation on volatile organic compound emissions needs to continue.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion remains the same as the previous year (years).

-
- Serbia is progressing towards EU accession; **however, sector environment (and climate action), is not among priorities on decision makers agenda. Consequently, sector is under pressure of non-effective financing, low institutional, human and technical capacities, as well us within the inter-sectoral cooperation with diagnosis that needed transformation is very slow;**
- It is **need to** mainstream sustainability in risk management and **foster long-termism** (environmental and climate risks are currently not always adequately taken into account by the financial sector; social factors can also have concrete consequences for financial institutions including legal risks, etc.);
- Environmental (and climate action) policy framework need to be reinforced in key economic and sectoral policies (like proper implementation of SEA, EIA, IPCC/Industrial Directives, investment tools); CSOs requested that the enforcement of SEA and EIA provisions be fully, and transparently, applied to any investments from IFIs, EU IPA funding, but also foreign investments, for instance, the Belt and Road initiative.
- It is necessary to **accelerate the awareness raising and dissemination of science/knowledge in environment and climate action issues (as well as energy efficiency)**; under the umbrella of ENV.net3 project in Serbia knowledge-based activities are acknowledged, as presented in this report. Such CSOs activities in sector, as a crucial component to long-term sustainable transition, should be financial supported, also by international donors; proactively cooperation between

different stakeholder groups on environmental and climate action issues (like NGOs with youth) and increase its communication with the media, need to have more support;

- It important to assure that quality, equity and relevance of **education and training on environment and climate action** match societal and economic needs.

4. Main references / Bibliography

- provided as footnotes