

Although the state authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been obliged to collect and publish the data on pollution since 2003, they are not able to launch an adequate system so far. Air in Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the dirtiest in Europe and in 2020, it was ranked 10th in the PM2.5 pollution worldwide. Despite that, citizens still have a hard time trying to understand: Who is responsible?

Non-governmental organizations Arnika (Czechia) and Eko forum Zenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina) published top-tens of the largest polluters for 2018 based on those data available. They urge the governments to ensure access to information from all large industries. The top-ten of the largest polluters of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be found [here](#).

Not surprisingly, large factories that are usually considered as the culprits of pollution lead the top-tens for 2018: ArcelorMittal Zenica, thermal power plants Tuzla, Ugljevik, Gacko, cement kilns Lukavac and Kakanj, GIKIL coke plant, and refinery in Slavonski Brod. Arnika and Eko forum Zenica publish the data collected from the state authorities since 2011. For the first time, the alternative database shows industries from both entities of the country. "There was a slight improvement in the data transparency by 2019, as the annual emission reports are finally publicly available online. However, the official websites are not user friendly and only experts can understand what the numbers represent. That is why we interpret the data and believe that the public will use them to act towards the polluters and the authorities. Without public demand, the environmental conditions will never improve," Samir Lemeš from Eko forum Zenica said.

Comparison of the data from the last decade enables us to recognize which companies invest in modernization and technologies to protect the environment and human health. Decrease in pollution from coal power plant Ugljevik was caused by investment into desulphurisation in 2019. Emissions of ArcelorMittal Zenica also decreased, but it was caused by the drop in production related to the global economic crisis; citizens of Zenica are still waiting for modernization.

Some of the largest polluters are still hiding their environmental footprint - such as the coal power plant in Kakanj. While in the EU, coal power plants report emissions of about 15 pollutants, Bosnian plants - such as coal power plant Gacko - publish data only on 3-5 basic chemicals. For example information on heavy metals releases, that represent serious threats to human health, is entirely missing.

Analysis of Arnika and Eko forum Zenica shows that the data submitted by the Industrial companies are not reliable and contain a huge load of errors - almost 90% of the data are irrelevant. Moreover, entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina operate different systems using

different methodologies.

“Although Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the PRTR Protocol in 2003, the parliaments did not ratify it till today. Thus, the system is not obligatory for industries. Transparency of data on pollution is a key step on a way to cleaner air. Without access to information, the state authorities cannot act. The public and the media are not able to control the situation, and the polluters can keep doing their business as usual at the expense of the environment and public health,” said Martin Skalsky, an expert on public participation from Arnika. For comparison, in Czechia, 1,334 facilities reported emissions in 2018 and the reports included 35 pollutants into air and others into soil, wastewater and waste, while in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina it was only 19 air-polluting substances and in the Republic of Srpska only 6 chemicals. The situation is not improving and the number of reported substances is basically the same today as it was back in 2011.

Source: eureporter.co