

Croatia is seeking an environmental impact assessment study before planning an oil terminal

In accordance with the Law, company Luka d.d. submitted a request to the Ministry this summer to conduct an assessment procedure on the need for an environmental impact assessment study. They enclosed an “Environmental Study” prepared by the company ANT from Zagreb, in which it was estimated that the environmental risk of explosion, fire and pollution is very small, almost none, if the terminal is well designed and built, and if it is well maintained.

Luka d.d. plans to build a terminal that would receive tankers with gasoline and diesel up to 40,000 tons. They intend to build four fuel tanks with a total capacity of 56,000 cubic meters, or a maximum of 47,320 tons. In the northern port, mega yachts would be loaded or fuel would be transported inland by rail and tanks. It was acknowledged that there is a possibility of pollution that would result from years of use of the terminal. But, the conclusion of the Study is that it is an industrial port area anyway, so that the damage that will occur will not be great.

Such an argument was not accepted by the competent authorities, the cities of Split and Kastel, the Split-Dalmatia County, the Inspectorate for Fire Protection, Firefighting and Civil Protection of the Ministry of the Interior, and the Maritime Administration of the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure.

In their statements, they requested that a procedure be carried out in which the terminal would be examined in order to have an impact on the environment. The County and the Fire Protection Inspectorate gave opinions that a significant negative impact on the environment cannot be ruled out, while the Maritime Administration concluded that a negative impact can be expected from the terminal, especially given the long-term consequences with other interventions planned in the same area.

The City of Kastel warned that the planned project is intended to be built along the border with the City of Solin and that in the event of sudden pollution of the sea with petroleum products, a significant negative impact on the entire waters of Kastel Bay can be expected. They noted that the spatial documents do not mention the construction of an oil terminal, but a commercial and industrial port, and the construction and maintenance of ships in the Free Zone of the northern port.

They claim that this location is mostly in the area of a seaport of international importance, and to a lesser extent in the area of economic purpose. They stated that according to the spatial plans, the existing and planned industrial and port facilities are densely located in the local surroundings, and warned that their cumulative impact on the environment should be considered. They also pointed out that the Study did not sufficiently address the impact of the planned intervention on human health and quality of life, as well as the burden of

ballast water.

Within the Ministry itself, the Directorate for Climate Activities did not consider it necessary to conduct an environmental impact study, and neither did the Directorate for Water Management and Marine Protection, nor the Directorate for Nature Protection, the Decision does not state their explanations. In the end, the Ministry concluded that an environmental impact study must be carried out, but not an assessment of the acceptability for the environmental network. The conclusion is, namely, that the project in question is not in the area of the environmental network.

The "Decision" shows that the arguments of those who warned of the significant negative impact on the environment that the planned terminal in the northern port with a total capacity of 56,000 m³ could have prevailed.

- Considering that this is a trade in flammable liquids, where in certain circumstances fires and explosions can occur, and thus endanger the health of people, animals, nature and material goods, a significant negative impact of the project in question cannot be ruled out components of the environment. - it is stated in the Decision of the Ministry.

- Also, due to the proximity of the project to the residential areas of the City of Split, Solin, Vranjica and Kastel in case of sudden pollution of the sea with petroleum products during manipulation and transport, a significant negative impact on human health in the City of Split, Vranjica and Solin impact on the entire Kastel Bay - according to the Ministry.

The Decision of the Ministry concludes that a significant negative impact on the environment cannot be ruled out also having in mind other planned interventions in the area of the North Port.

"Like the reconstruction and expansion in the port area of Vranje-Solin basin under the management of the Port of Split, which is why in the coming period we can expect a significantly higher load on all components of the environment, and consequently it is necessary to consider the cumulative impact of these interventions in the same area."

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