

Russia is ready to pay for cleaner technologies to be installed in a major oil refinery situated across the border in Bosanski Brod.

Russia is ready to fully pay for the introduction of cleaner production technologies in a large refinery in Bosanski Brod in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is an important issue for citizens of the area, including in Slavonski Brod in Croatia, who have a lot of health problems in recent years due to pollution and smell coming from the refinery.

Russian Ambassador to Croatia Anvar Azimov revealed the details of the plan which would enable the solution for, as he calls it, the “most irritant problem” in relations between Moscow and Zagreb. “Although we have already invested several million euros in filters and environmental protection in the refinery in Bosanski Brod, there is only one real solution”, said the Russian diplomat.

The refinery in Bosanski Brod is owned by the Russian state company Zarubezhneft from Moscow. The refinery’s power plant, which runs the machines for processing of crude oil, is using the oil which is being processed at the refinery as fuel. Given that this is a crude oil with a large share of chemical impurities, mostly sulphur, pollution is substantial and it threatens the lives of people both in Bosanski Brod and, across the Sava river, in Slavonski Brod in Croatia.

Ambassador Azimov. In this case, crude oil in the power plant would be replaced with gas which is much cleaner and more environmentally friendly, and that would dramatically reduce air pollution. The price of the project is about 10 million euros, and Russia would pay for it all. “We are discussing possible options with private contractors from Croatia”, said the Russian diplomat who personally visited both Slavonski Brod and Bosanski Brod in order to see for himself the extent of contamination. “We would need to build a part of a separate pipeline from Croatia to the refinery. I am sure that we could eliminate 90 percent of pollution”, said the Ambassador.

Igor Dekanić, a prominent oil expert, confirmed that the introduction of gas in the refinery would greatly reduce the level of pollution. “The introduction of gas, as is the case in modern refineries, would lead to a reduction in pollution.” He added that this is not an entirely new idea for the refinery in Bosanski Brod and it has already been mentioned as a possibility. On the other hand, the Russians, in addition to the costs, also see some potential benefits since the gas to power the refinery would come from Russia.

Croatia and the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been unsuccessfully negotiating about the issue of air pollution coming from the refinery. Despite several signed protocols, residents of Slavonski Brod have not seen any improvement. At the same time, the refinery is posting substantial losses which are growing from year to year. Revenues are in serious

decline due to the situation with the global oil business. According to published data, the total loss of the refinery in Bosanski Brod has grown to a total of 284 million euros.
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