

On the eve of the session of the Croatian Parliament, representatives of the network of associations and initiatives “Zero Waste Croatia” and the platform of organizations associated in the fight against plastic pollution, held an action on St. Mark’s Square. They called on members of parliament to defend the public interest and protect the environment. They warned that Minister Tomislav Čorić’s legal proposal would not contribute to resolving the accumulated problems, but would ensure the continuation of unsustainable practices. The banner “Law without ambition, loser tradition” was appropriately displayed.

“Measures and goals of the new law must be aimed at banning unnecessary disposable products and the development of effective systems for the prevention of recycling, recycling, composting and reuse,” said Marko Košak from the Green Action.

Given that Croatia is at the European bottom in meeting the goals of reducing waste generation and increasing its recycling and reuse, the new law should be a wind in the back of good local practices. “Unfortunately, Minister Čorić continues in the wrong direction and again imposes an obligation on cities and municipalities to hand over mixed waste to regional centers, although the example of Marišćina and Kaštijun has shown that they are socially, ecologically and economically unacceptable,” said Košak. He added that the new provision that Waste Management Plans are no longer adopted by local self-government, but by counties, which indicates that the work of regional centers is favored, instead of the necessary decentralization of the system, is also worrying.

With persistent forcing of proven failed ideas and lack of ambition, even existing ambition is derogated. For example, the target of 60 percent recycling by 2022, which is prescribed by the current Waste Management Plan of the Republic of Croatia, is being replaced by a weaker target of 55 percent by 2025. “It is clear to the birds on the branch that Minister Čorić’s goals are just a dead letter on paper, despite the praise for the progress that does not hold water,” Košak added.

Siniša Bosanac from the civic initiative “Koprivnica as we deserve” said that despite the proclaimed turn to the green economy, an outdated concept is being pushed that wants to fulfill the interests of incineration groups through regional garbage centers. By burning, valuable raw materials would go into harmful smoke and toxic ash. This is evidenced by feasibility studies for new centers based on outdated technologies and overcrowded capacity. A good example is Piškornica, which would bring garbage from as many as six, and perhaps more counties. “The construction of Piškornica would certainly lead to damage that is already in sight because garbage is deposited on Piškornica, fires break out and the surrounding streams are polluted, all near water wells, aquifers and important food industries,” Bosanac said, adding that the law does not solve the problem. landfill control,

quantity manipulation and turning garbage disposal into lucrative businesses to enrich individuals ”.

Branka Genzić-Horvat from the association UZOR emphasized that the drastic increase in bill prices, as has already happened in Istria and Kvarner due to the collapse of garbage centers, is a fate that awaits citizens in the rest of Croatia. “Waste must be turned into valuable raw materials for new products, and not into garbage for landfills or incineration with great environmental and health damage,” said Genzic-Horvat. She explained that due to non-compliance with EU directives and inadequate studies, associations and initiatives have filed charges against garbage centers before Croatian and European judicial authorities. “Although Minister Ćorić is not giving up, because he is trying to push through the law provisions on unfair collection that do not respect the polluter pays principle, we will not give up in our fight for a sustainable and fair waste management system,” concluded Genzić-Horvat.

Petra Andrić from the Greenpeace organization pointed out that it is important for this umbrella law to be as specific and ambitious as possible in the parts where it refers to disposable plastic. “We are pleased that the ban on lightweight plastic carrying bags is finally coming into force, but we want to emphasize once again the requirement that it be extended to very lightweight plastic bags. Also, a ban on a dozen items is prescribed, but it is also important to set a specific goal of reducing consumption for those disposable plastic products that will remain on the market - 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030, “said Andrić and added. there are not enough measures in place to develop a reusable system that can effectively replace disposable products and create many green jobs. Until its final version, this law must be more ambitious and show a real intention to face the growing problem of plastic pollution.

The associations invite members of parliament to consider the reasoned remarks of civil society organizations and the public, and in the parliamentary debate advocate for changes in the law that are necessary to improve the quality of life and environmental protection.

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