

About twenty activists gathered in front of the entrance of the “Mei Ta” factory in Baric, carrying banners with the messages “Stop air pollution”, “What are you poisoning us with?” and “Resolutely against pollutants”. On Saturday, November 7, the non-governmental initiative “Let’s Defend Kosutnjak” held an action under the slogan “Resolutely against pollutants” in front of the Chinese car parts factory “Mei Ta” in Baric, which is considered a major polluter of the environment in Obrenovac municipality near Belgrade. According to Snezana Nedeljkovic from “Let’s Defend Kosutnjak”, the protest was organized to draw the public’s attention to the fact that the residents of Baric and Obrenovac are facing unpleasant air odors due to industrial smoke, but also that “Mei Ta” does not have a wastewater treatment plant.

“In the production process, waste oils are separated, which are extremely dangerous and harmful and which are poured directly into the Sava with all other waste. “At 300 to 400 meters from that place, there is a water intake, from where the citizens of Baric and the surrounding places are supplied with water!”, Said Nedeljković at the press conference in front of the “Mei Ta” factory.

She adds that the authorities claim that the water in Baric is safe to drink, but that the activists are “sure that this is not true”. When asked if the activists have proof that the factory discharges dangerous substances into the river, Nedeljković answered that the only evidence is “a photograph taken from the air by a drone, which shows a pipe that discharges water directly into the Sava”.

“It simply came to our notice then. You cannot enter ‘Mei Ta’ and do any analysis, because it is a factory in which our state has no competencies. But, an analysis of water from the Sava can be done near the place where wastewater is discharged, “said Nedeljković.

Aleksandar Krstić, a resident of Barič, told the media that the locals were complaining because they had to buy bottled water.

“The water (from the faucet) started to have a strange taste. Also, he cannot sit outside due to bad air. Simply, the situation in Baric is not good, “said Krstic.

The factory for the production of automobile parts “Mei Ta” started to be built in 2016. It was put into operation in April 2017, and two years later, in June 2019, another factory with the same name was opened in the same place. As Snezana Nedeljkovic said, this factory was first supposed to be a machine workshop of a factory for the production of car parts, tool shops and a warehouse, but it was soon turned into a foundry.

“As a machine workshop, it was not considered dangerous for the environment, so the City Secretariat for Environmental Protection considered that it was not necessary to do an environmental impact assessment,” Nedeljković explained.

As she added, the construction of the factory was supposed to go in phases, where they would build a foundry in the second phase.

“They built the foundry immediately. It is an object of ferrous metallurgy. “Dangerous substances are used during the production process, and one liter of waste lubricating oil pollutes one million liters of water,” she claims. The protest was also supported by the “One in Five Million” association, and there were no incidents.

Radio Slobodna Evropa tried to get in touch with the management of this factory, and when asked how they protect the environment, we did not receive an answer until this text was published. On the other hand, their official website says that the company achieves environmental protection by preventing pollution and improving the work process.

According to the words of the Minister of Finance, Siniša Mali, the construction of two factories for the production of auto parts “Mei Ta” cost a total of 150 million euros. Mali stated that in June 2019, at the opening of the second factory “Mei Ta” in Baric.

Source: slobodnaevropa.org