

Serbia's Ne Davimo Beograd movement has submitted two complaints to the Energy Community Secretariat, challenging government decisions for the Suez-Itochu consortium's 340,000 tonnes-per-year municipal waste incinerator in Belgrade. In 2017 the Beo Clean Energy consortium, owned by Suez, Itochu and the Marguerite II Fund, signed a concession agreement with the Belgrade city authorities for a 340,000 tonne-per-year municipal waste incinerator next to the existing Vinca landfill, along with a new landfill, construction waste facility and landfill gas facility. The project is financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation and the Austrian Development Bank (OeEB).

The first complaint challenges the approval by the Ministry of Mining and Energy in September 2019 of a feed-in tariff for all electricity generated by the incinerator. Only energy from the biodegradable fraction of waste is considered renewable under the EU's 2009 Renewable Energy Directive, to which Serbia has committed under the Energy Community Treaty.

The second complaint alleges that the Serbian government breached the EU Directive on environmental impact assessment (EIA) by issuing a construction permit for the incinerator in August 2019, a month and a half before the EIA was approved. This, according to the complaint, prejudiced the outcome of the EIA process and rendered the public consultation meaningless.

Aleksa Petković of Ne Davimo Beograd said, "Burning mixed municipal waste and diesel as an auxiliary fuel is clearly not renewable energy and must not receive subsidies. The EU is moving towards a circular economy, increasing separate waste collection and recycling. Serbia deserves a healthy and efficient system too, but it will never develop if we lock Belgrade into expensive, polluting and wasteful incineration."

Pippa Gallop of CEE Bankwatch Network said: "The European Commission and European Investment Bank declined to back this project because it would hinder Serbia in reaching EU circular economy targets. But other public lenders press on, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Financial Corporation, the Marguerite II Fund and Austrian Development Bank, in blatant disregard for EU law. They need to stop digging and withdraw from the project".

Source: bankwatch.org