

## The new Croatian government must completely abandon Adriatic drilling and make a shift towards renewable energy

In the official programme of the new Government of the Republic of Croatia, which was the basis for a vote of confidence by the Parliament on Friday, the implementation of a “moratorium on the current project of exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the area of the Adriatic Sea” is among key guidelines for the energy sector. The coalition of NGOs “S.O.S. Adriatic” welcomes this commitment, which it actively promoted and argued for from the start of the preparation and implementation of this harmful and dirty project. A series of public opinion polls testify that the Adriatic drilling project is opposed by most citizens.

However, it is not clear if the government will permanently abandon the drilling of the Adriatic or if they are just using semantics (“current project”) which would leave the door open for the continuation of the project in a new form or arrangement.

“The moratorium on the drilling of the Adriatic is an absolute minimum which shouldn’t be crossed in a country where the sea and tourism literally mean life. Moreover, it is necessary to permanently cancel the project. This year marked a record growth and the tourism revenue climbed to 9.3 billion euros, while in previous years it ranged around 7.5 billion. If the new government is putting emphasis on economy and finance, these figures should be sufficient enough to clearly say ‘goodbye forever’ to Adriatic drilling!”, said Zoran Tomić from Greenpeace.

The political party ‘Most’ already announced in its election programme a “full deflection from hydrocarbons in the energy sector”, while their coalition partner, the political party HDZ, had contradictory views on this issue. The president of HDZ, Mr. Tomislav Karamarko, publicly said before the elections that “dangerous experiments with oil drilling in the Adriatic are not the best solution”. But in HDZ’s written response to ‘Most’ in late November, the party urged for even more intensive exploration of hydrocarbons. At that time, they said: “(...) our goal is to continue to enable intensive research in all promising areas, such as the Pannonian basin, Dinarides and the Adriatic”.

“We urge the prime minister Orešković and the presidents of ‘Most’ and HDZ, as the leading people of the new Government, to draft a new energy strategy in cooperation with credible experts and interested public. The strategy should be based on sustainable development, which consequently won’t leave room for new fossil fuel projects,” concluded Bernard Ivčić from Zelena akcija/Friends of the Earth Croatia.

In addition to direct economic and environmental threats in Croatia, the exploitation of hydrocarbons from the Adriatic would contribute to global climate change – and we can already feel the consequences in our country.

Croatia is one of the 196 countries that have adopted a new international agreement in

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Paris in December 2015, which will be formally signed on 22 April, and which states that global temperature increase should be kept at 1.5°C. In practice this means stopping new fossil fuels projects and making a strong shift towards renewable energy, which the Adriatic has fantastic conditions for.

“S.O.S. Adriatic” is a coalition of environmental NGOs whose aim is to preserve the whole Adriatic from oil pollution. During the campaign, there were more than 20 actions, 3750 citizens sent written objections to the project, and people in more than 20 cities and islands have joined activities against the Adriatic drilling. These are just a few examples that show how crucial the opposition from citizens, as well as the “S.O.S. Adriatic” campaign, were for the announcement of the moratorium.

source: [soszajadran.hr](http://soszajadran.hr)