

The report on the state of the environment of the city of Pancevo for 2019, published in September 2020, shows that the air, as in previous years, was polluted, loaded with suspension particles and soot. The average annual value of suspended particles of 40 micrograms per cubic meter, at three measuring points, was not exceeded, but the number of days when the increased daily limit value was exceeded everywhere was exceeded. At the measuring point Starcevo, the largest number of days was recorded with elevated concentrations of suspended particles - 73 days, compared to the borderline 35, while at the other two stations the number was 47 and 46. Measurements of the Public Health Institute Pancevo showed an alarming situation. place Narodna basta, where the air was with threatening concentrations of PM10 for 205 days, and during 107 days the air was heavily polluted.

Due to excessive air pollution in the city of Pancevo, during the previous few years, the Protector of Citizens in January last year initiated a procedure to control the work of the City Administration of Pancevo, and five other local governments. In a letter dated January 17, 2020, sent to the mayor of Pancevo, Sasa Pavlov, in which we had an insight, the ombudsman states that excessive air pollution has been affecting the city on the Thames for a long time, and that no concrete measures have been taken during that period. However, the documentation obtained by Panpres shows that this control did not reveal any irregularities in the city of the City Administration of the City of Pancevo, and that the procedure will not be continued. In the report from July 2020, the Protector of Citizens states that "the city of Pancevo has adopted the Air Quality Plan, and is actively implementing it." He also stated that urgent and long-term measures have been taken or are being taken, to eliminate the main causes of pollution. When asked by our editorial office to the Protector of Citizens, to explain why it is first claimed that no concrete measures were taken (based on which it was determined that the measures do not give results), and only after a few months the Protector determined that measures were taken, we did not receive an answer. However, in the final report, the Ombudsman recommended the City Administration of Pancevo to ensure transparency of information, because it was determined that one of the main causes of citizens' dissatisfaction, as well as their distrust in the competent authorities, is the factor of information and availability of information. He also points out the need for more transparent actions of the competent authorities in order to inform the citizens about the activities undertaken in connection with the protection of the environment.

Ognjan Pantic, researcher on projects in the field of energy, climate and environment at the Belgrade Open School (BOŠ), concludes that, taking into account the decision of the

Protector of Citizens in other local governments, the Ombudsman makes recommendations and opinions based on whether documents have been adopted. The Law on Air Protection provides for cities and municipalities with excessively polluted air, without going into the analysis of whether the documents, where they exist, gave results. Panpres also received a response that the Secretariat for Environmental Protection of the City Administration of the City of Pancevo sent to the Ombudsman. It states that one of the most significant sources of pollution is individual fireplaces, because only 30-35 of the city's population is covered by a district heating system. Therefore, every year the city of Pancevo provides funds for co-financing of individual gas connections as one of the measures to reduce air pollution (primarily PM 10).

However, Teodora Markovic, from the Pancevo environmental association Zeleni most, says that the mentioned measure is not implemented on the territory of the entire city of Pancevo, and that populated places are excluded from this action, while gasification in the city is slowly being realized. In order to really prevent the use of fossil fuels, she believes that fuel made from biomass should be sold at preferential prices, while the prices of fossil fuels should be raised. However, due to the inertia of the local self-government, we will still wait for the solution of this problem, our interlocutor estimates. As one of the important polluters in the city, the Secretariat recognized traffic, where, as they say, they are working on replacing the old vehicle fleet, using public transport, bicycles, and through public-private partnership, the city received new buses with Euro 6 engines.

The City Secretariat also states that air, water, noise, and soil monitoring is conducted every year, and all reports, as it is written in the response of the City Secretariat to the Ombudsman, are available on the city's website. The measurements are carried out within the automatic system for continuous monitoring of air quality in the city of Pancevo at four measuring stations, as well as within the additional measurement of air quality performed by an expert agency. Systematic measurement of air quality is also financed by the competent ministry at two measuring points. The document also says that information on air quality is available through daily duty reports when the limit and tolerance values were exceeded at the city monitoring, monthly and annual reports on the state of the environment, air quality plan, measurements of concentrations from automatic monitoring, as well as annual air quality report for the city of Pancevo prepared by the Public Health Institute Pancevo. The data are published on the official website of the city, the monitoring of the city of Pancevo, as well as on the website of the Institute of Public Health Pancevo. It is stated that the local government will start drafting a new Air Quality Plan (the previous one was adopted in 2018), within which new measures will be proposed.

Air quality information is (not) available to citizens

However, Teodora Markovic claims that citizens are not sufficiently informed about pollution. The claim is supported by the fact that data on air pollution can be found on the website of the Public Health Institute in Pancevo, for each day and month, but the annual report on air quality for the city of Pancevo is missing, four years ago. On the city's website itself, monthly reports for the last four months of 2020 are missing. She notes that the effect of the listed urgent and long-term measures to reduce pollution is largely absent, and some of them are not applied in an appropriate manner. Citizens, as he says, are not regularly informed about pollution, sensitive categories of the population are not protected, and they are deprived of advice during the day when the pollution is increased. Generators of industrial pollution in Pancevo, in the previous period, were factories in the Southern Zone, but as our interlocutor notes, primarily the Pancevo Oil Refinery proved to be responsible, because in the last ten years it has renewed some of its systems for purifying substances released into the air.

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