

# **Increasing Public Participation for the Purpose of Reducing Industrial Pollution in Elbasan (Commune of Bradashesh)**

*Implemented by NGO Ecological Club Elbasan*

*Implementation period: Dec 2005-Nov 2006*

---

## **Project background**

Due to the heavy industry, the Municipality of Elbasan has accumulated historical pollution that is by now present not only in the air but also deposited in the soil and the river banks. In the past years increased car traffic adds to the already overburdened environment. Residents of the Elbasan Municipality mostly complain of respiratory problems, particularly among children and youth but the pollution leads on long term also to a diversity of cardiac and lung diseases. The Ecological Club Elbasan subscribed to develop an action plan to improve air quality using public participation methods and involving the Municipal and Commune authorities, the public, industrial operators, relevant NGOs, and elected federal representatives.

## **Activities implemented during**

- Within the group of the Eco-movement (a union of 20 environment association from all the republic.) a meeting was held to identify the possible steps, to address the air pollution situation, and its negative effects on health and finding solutions to improve them.



- The Ecological Club mobilized also the young members of the NGO community to involve them in the awareness raising campaign about the pollution from the big industrial operators. The youngsters prepared and delivered materials, folders, posters about the Aarhus Convention for public participation.
- Roundtable meeting was held in March with the participation of local and central government (Prefecture, Municipality, Environment and

Health Commission, Environmental Regional Agency, NGOs, universities, high schools and journalists of written and electronic media) and also the business partners of the big pollutant operators were the stakeholders addressing the different elements of the pollution focusing to the impact on the air.

- In May a capacity building seminar was held and attended by the key stakeholders that have a role or/and are affected by the air pollution. The agenda covered elements of access to information and public participation as well as practical exercises that prepared the ground for collecting elements that should be part of action plan.
- Members of diverse stakeholder groups were involved in the drafting of an outline for an air pollution strategy and action plan that starts off by assessing the air pollution situation and identifies the key issues for the future plans as follows:

dust pollution from increasing traffic, accumulated soil/air pollution, air pollution emerging from the currently operating.

- The draft paper identified as one of the main elements for the improvement the information dissemination with regard to substances that are in the air and their impact on human health, creation of a center that would coordinate the treatment of the diseases caused by air pollution.



- Municipal Council prepared concrete proposals for reinforcement regarding the control and conformity of emissions of the industrial operators and better cooperation with the Regional

Environmental Agency as well as to the establishment of green surfaces to tame the impact of industrial pollution.

- The draft proposals were discussed with the locals in a public hearing and their contribution was incorporated into the final document that was sent to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration.

### **Final results and outcomes**

The problem that the pilot project focused on ranged from consequences of historical soil/water and air pollution, increasing pollution caused by car traffic, low reinforcement on emission regulations, lack of regular and proper information regarding impact of air pollution on human health.

In such a complex context the action plan and strategy with regard to air pollution brought factual findings and solution that were commonly designed where both local authority, industrial; operators and public had the opportunity to give input.

Thus the common work led to identification of the main and most urgent problems and proposed some of the solution that can financially backed up from local resources and gave indication for the national level authority that further support and better cooperation is needed in order to solve the air pollution related situation.