

# **The Citizens of Tuzla have a Right to Know!**

*The Center for Ecology and Energy (CEETZ), Bosnia and Herzegovina (city of Tuzla)*

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## **Project Background**

There are five air quality monitoring stations in and around the city of Tuzla. Once a month, the media reports current air quality levels. However, information is not provided in clear language. As well, in cases of critical air pollution levels, special announcements are not made to alert the public, nor are special measures taken to safeguard public health. The Center for Ecology and Energy would like to see this change. Specifically, they would like to ensure that pollution levels are announced daily, that special announcements are made when air pollution exceeds safe limits, and that legal measures can be taken when air pollution exceeds these limits. Given that existing laws indicate that citizens have a right to access information but are uninformed of this right and the process itself is cumbersome, the Center for Ecology and Energy will undertake an awareness raising/media campaign to encourage the government to alter their existing information distribution methods.

## **Goals and Overall Objectives**

### **Raise Public Awareness of Air Quality issues**

The general public is not currently aware of the effects of air quality on their health, what reported air quality figures mean, and how to access information neither of the possibilities through which a change could be made. This must be ameliorated.

### **Encourage Authorities to Provide Air Quality Information**

The current method of announcing air pollution levels is inadequate and incomplete and incomprehensible to the average citizen. The authorities must be encouraged to alter the current means of information access and distribution.

### **Ensure that The Public has better Access to Air Quality Information Now and in the Future**

Air quality will continue to be an issue in the future. The means of properly informing citizens should be established now so that citizens know their risks and can take the necessary measures to protect themselves through such measures as legal actions.

## **How to Get There – Specific Activities**

- **Collecting Information on Air Quality Monitoring and Access to Information**

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After the formulation of a working group (composed of representatives from government, media, and academia, as well as NGOs, businesses, medical staff, and international experts), information will be collected from ministries, the internet, and a public survey so as to assess the current air monitoring information distribution process, as well as how citizens can access this information, and finally whether the public is aware of their right to access information and how to go about it.

- **Awareness Raising Activities**

Information collected through working group activities will be channeled into the promotion and distribution of a series of flyers and workshops to inform citizens of air pollution and access issues and to solicit feedback.

- **Workshops**

Knowledge about the air quality issues and their possible solutions are needed to be addressed in way that would lead participants to a better understanding of the tools that can be used to address the local problem and would drive them to have constructive discussions. It will support the process of planning for a strategy for a longer period.

- **Media And Street Campaign**

In order to encourage the government to improve the reporting of air quality, and to increase the public's familiarity with air quality issues, the working group in coordination with the Center for Ecology and Energy will undertake a) a street campaign; and b) a continuous media campaign. The former will involve both street level awareness raising (leaflets, posters, presentations and dramatizations), as well as "over-the-limit" street actions in cases where air pollution levels exceed allowable limits without being reported. In terms of the latter, a continuous media campaign will include a number of radio jingles, newspaper articles, media interviews, and TV broadcasts informing the public about air quality issues. A weather forecast-like bulletin will be created to communicate via television current air quality levels using simple language.

## Outcomes

In addition to drawing attention to pollution levels and increasing the public's capacity to access information on this issue, the Center for Ecology and Energy hopes that the project will encourage the government to publish air quality information daily and make themselves more accessible to public requests for information.