

# **Public Awareness-Raising and Joint Activity of Stakeholders in Decision-Making Process Aiming to Find the Best Solution for Port Milena Lagune – Ecological “Black Point” for Municipality of Ulcinj**

*Greens of Montenegro, Serbia and Montenegro (Municipality of Ulcinj)*

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## **Project Background**

The Port Milena Lagoon near the Municipality of Ulcinj is a valuable natural site, a tourist attraction, and a source of fish for the local population. Due to improper wastewater management and neglect – specifically emanating from the Ulcinj Salt Factory – as well as environmental pressures caused by the tourism accommodations near the Lagoon which lack proper waste management facilities. The Lagoon has become polluted and currently threatens public health. Greens of Montenegro would like to establish a concrete link between the authorities, tourist industry, salt factor, and the public regarding Lagoon pollution, both to encourage all parties to be aware of the problem, and to advance the utilization of public participation mechanisms as a means by which to craft potential solutions. Given that the Master Plan for Tourism until 2020 recommends engaging in public participation, Greens of Montenegro hopes that the authorities as well as all stakeholders will cooperate in the project and that authorities will implement any identified solutions to the current problem in light of both the need to engage in public participation, and the public participation requirements set out in the Tourism Plan. Throughout the project, the usefulness of the Aarhus Convention – and the need for its endorsement at the national level – will be emphasized.

## **Goals and Overall Objectives**

- **Promote Aarhus Convention (2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar)**  
While Serbia and Montenegro has not signed the Aarhus Convention, the UN-initiative could provide significant benefits to both the public and authorities in terms of advancing holistic environmental solutions to health threats posed by the Lagoon, and by increasing the transparency of the decision-making process. For this reason, Greens of Montenegro will promote the Aarhus Convention throughout the current project to encourage broad-based public support.
- **Raise Public Awareness of Lagoon Pollution**  
The public needs to be informed of the pollution levels in the Lagoon both from a public health perspective and to encourage their participation in possible solutions.
- **Gather Input from all Stakeholders to Draft a Solution**  
By alerting and all stakeholders – public, administrative, and sectoral – about Lagoon pollution, and encouraging feedback, Greens of Montenegro would like to harness

input from all sectors into follow-up solutions which can be used to solve the problem.

## How to Get There – Specific Activities

- **Raising Public Awareness Through Information/Media Campaign**

After initiating the project with the support of all stakeholders – who will be regularly consulted through project meetings – Greens of Montenegro will facilitate an awareness-raising campaign. With the cooperation of the National Agency for the Management of Marine Zones, the National Institute for Health Protection as sources of relevant information, as well as relevant ministries (environment, agriculture, health, and tourism), information will be collected, summarized, and disclosed to the public regarding the current ecological situation of the Lagoon through a combination of leaflets, media coverage, internet-based information, and public presentations. As well, Greens of Montenegro will inform the public of public participation mechanisms as set out in the Aarhus Convention, and the potential for establishing a protected site-status for the Lagoon. The information/media campaign will be ongoing throughout the project and will target residents near the Lagoon.
- **Conducting Questionnaires to Gather Public Input**

With the cooperation of relevant institutional and administrative stakeholders – who will also get a chance to respond to a similar questionnaire – questions will be developed for a survey to be distributed to 500 members of the local population. The survey will focus on the level of public understanding of the current ecological problems, their feelings about the problem, their perspectives on causes, and their suggestions for possible solutions. A summary report will be written and translated into Albanian (the dominant language of the public).
- **Facilitating a Roundtable with Relevant Authorities, and Sectors to Discuss Solutions**

In addition to gathering public input through the questionnaire, relevant stakeholders including administrators and sectoral representatives from tourism and salt production will work together with the support of Greens of Montenegro to draft a plan to address ecological problems, taking into consideration public input from the questionnaires.
- **Facilitating Public Roundtables**

Public roundtables will be held, gathering all stakeholders, to facilitate the collection of public input on the results of the questionnaires. At the end of the second roundtable, a series of general recommendations for all sectors will be written and translated into Albanian.
- **Preparing Final Plan to Relevant Authorities**

While it is up to authorities as to whether they will address both the ecological issue and implement the final plan, Greens of Montenegro hopes that both the engagement of all stakeholders including public authorities in project activities, in combination

with the publishing and wide dissemination of the final report to relevant stakeholders and the media, will encourage them to do so. Lastly, the fact that Montenegro is in the process of drafting a National Plan for Sustainable Development, encourages the likelihood that administrative stakeholders will utilize the lessons learned from this project, and realize the ecological and social benefits of implementing identified solutions.

## Outcomes

Through a combination of public awareness raising activities, networking authorities and stakeholders, and facilitating dialogue, Greens of Montenegro will produce a plan to address the current ecological problems, and encourage the plans adoption by authorities. As a corollary, Greens of Montenegro will also raise the awareness of all stakeholders about the benefits of public participation as per the Aarhus Convention, encouraging its adoption at the national level. Finally, lessons learned will be made available to national administrators in a context where a National Strategy for Sustainable Development is being drafted, increasing the saliency of the relevance of the Aarhus Convention, and the need for ecological solutions to be realized across sectors.