Pollution: Campaigns ten times more expensive than measuring stations



"Green Revolution" - Clean Air Protests November 2019, Skopje

Subheading 1: For the last three years, more precisely from 2017 to 2019, the city of Skopje spent a total of 195.150.000 denars or just over 3 million euros, which is ten times more than the money allocated for the measuring stations

Subheading 2: Prilep, Stip and Sveti Nikole did not allocate funds for dealing with air pollution

Autor: Jasminka Stojanovska

The City of Skopje has spent at least 10 times more money on environmental pollution campaigns, studies and researches in the last three years, than the state has spent on procurement of instruments for measuring stations for air pollution in the country. Only in 2019, authorities of Skopje allocateda record amount so far to fight pollution, a year in which Skopje and the country became known as one of the most polluted places in Europe and the world. Unlike Skopje, other

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municipalities do not allocate much money to tackle pollution, and some rely on the wind as the only way out of harmful particles that kill at least 1,000 people a year in the country.

Pollution more visible than results

For the period of the last three years, more precisely from 2017 until 2019, the city of Skopje has spent a total of 195.150.000 denars or just over 3 million euro. According to the data we received from the City of Skopje, 26,95 million or over 400,000 euro were allocated in 2017 for the City of Skopje to update its Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2013 to 2015 and map emissions from household heating in collaboration with UNDP, then to investigate the effects of air pollution on human health, as well as to elaborate studies on ambient air pollution from traffic and part of the funds were earmarked for subsidies to citizens for the purchase of pellet stoves.

The next year, 2018, budget was 74.9 million denars or 1.2 million euros. And the money was earmarked for a health profile of the City of Skopje, followed by a campaign to raise awareness of the negative effects of waste incineration and the use of inappropriate fuels for heating, as well as for investigating the effects of air pollution on human health and investigations about ambient air pollution from wood burning as a household heating and about ambient air pollution from traffic. Some of the funds were earmarked for subsidies to citizens for the purchase of pellet stoves, then subsidies to private companies involved in public transport of passengers for installing gas appliances and buying buses, subsidies to JSP for free transportation in days of alarming polluted air, subsidizing PE City Parking for free parking on mount Vodno on weekends, in the parking lot "Makedonska Falanga" and in the parking lot near "Nova Makedonija" and subsidies for citizens for the purchase of bicycles and subsidies for households and other chimney cleaning services.

While most of the funds, a total of 93.3 million denars or just over 1.5 million euros were spent last year, 2019. The money was intended to investigate the effects of air pollution on human health, then tests of ambient air pollution by combustion of wood as a means of heating, as well as tests of ambient air pollution from traffic. Last year as well as the previous year, citizens were subsidized for the purchase of pellet stoves, then subsidies were distributed to private companies involved in public transport of passengers for installing gas appliances and buying buses with EURO 5 and EURO 6, and were given subsidies to citizens and inverters, then chimney sweeps, as well as JSP subsidies for free transportation during the days of alarming air pollution, and subsidies to citizens for the purchase of bicycles.

However, the increase in the amounts from year to year did not affect the reduction of

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pollution. On the contrary, Skopje, as well as the country, this winter was ranked in the top 10 most polluted places in the world top rankings. Such conditions also alarmed the citizens, who, on two occasions this winter rallied to peaceful protests, expressing outrage over the alarming air pollution situation in the capital city, and generally against the authorities for not taking action.

When analyzing the data, the conclusion is that environmental protection funds allocated by local government and national institutions are not always used to tackle air pollution. Namely, the public often asks why in spite of a large number of studies, studies, projects, media campaigns, activities of civil society organizations, a number of measures announced by the competent institutions, etc. air pollution is still not reduced. Why Republic of NorthMacedonia is in the top 10 countries in the world after pollution?What was the reason for the enormous concentrations of PM particles and other air pollutants in Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola, Tetovo, Kavadarci and other cities in the Republic of North Macedonia in recent months?

Skopje suffocates, but other cities "don't breathe" too

Apart from Skopje, which is always at the top of the world in terms of measured concentrations of pollutants, in the past period the pollution in Kumanovo was several times higher than the permitted limit values.

On December 5th, last year, Kumanovo was noted as the most polluted city in the country. According to the “My Air” application, the concentration of PM 10 particles in the air at 6 pm was 468 mg / m3, while at 9 pm it was 339 mg / m3. That is 9 or 7 times higher than the permissible limit of 50 micrograms per cubic meter.

We requested information in the **municipality of Kumanovo** about the budgetso far allocated and spent in the previous three years to fight air pollution. According to what was provided to us, the municipality has provided much more funds to tackle the pollution than it has spent. Although we requested, we did not receive any information from the municipality about what funds are used for and the difference between planned and used funds.

According to the information from the Kumanovo Extreme Pollution Examination, the reason was the heating of the fuel oil in the hospital in Kumanovo. This problem has been detected by the municipality and therefore appropriate measures are being taken. Gasification of the Kumanovo Hospital is under way to solve this problem, but the investment should be assisted by the Ministry of Health.

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Data for the municipality of Kumanovo

	Envisaged		Realized	
2017	0,00 MKD		0,00 MKD	
2018	2.600.000,00 MKD	R10- Environmental protection	88.888,00 MKD	Other Transfers- Gas Subsidies
	3.500.000,00 MKD	RAO- Environmental Protection- Capital Expenditures		
2019	500.000,00 MKD	R10- Environmental protection	141.180,00 MKD	Other Transfers- Gas Subsidies
	1.700.000,00 MKD	RAO- Environmental Protection- Capital Expenditures	939.750,00 MKD	Purchase of other motor vehicles
Total:	**8.300.000,00 MKD**		**1.169.818,00 MKD**	

In 2019 the municipality of Kumanovo has taken certain measures to reduce the pollution (Decision on anti-pollution measures) and most of the results were given by the decision of the aerosolization which is implemented when there is enormous pollution in the city, which in turn is a measure of last resort.

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Република Северна Македонија

ОПШТИНА КУМАНОВО
Сектор за поддршка на Градоначалникот и Советот на Општината, информирање и односи со јавноста и информатичка технологија

Република Северна Македонија
Republika e Maqedonisë së Veriut
Општина Куманово
Komuna e Kumanovës
Бр.Nr. 30-8047/3
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Куманово ... г. Потпис,

До
Јасминка Стојановска
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1000 Скопје

Предмет: Одговор на барање за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер

Почитувани,

Согласно Вашето барање за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер дали општина Куманово има план за справување со загадувањето на воздухот, Ве информираме дека општината има донесено одлука за донесување на вонредни мерки за намалување на загадувањето на амбиенталниот воздух во општина Куманово, кои ќе бидат составен дел од планот за квалитет на амбиенталниот воздух на територијата на општина Куманово (2019-2023). Исто така, секоја година на седница на совет,се донесува и програма за квалитет на воздухот.

Изработил: Арсовска Бисера

Сектор за поддршка на Градоначалникот и Советот на Општината,информирање и односи со јавноста и информатичка технологија

Раководител,
Сунај Мустафа

Response to the request for free access to public information Municipality of Kumanovo

According to the submitted reports, supervision is in the area of waste disposal from the activities of legal entities. There are several reports where the use of liquid fuel and charcoal obliges legal entities to set filters but not to measure emissionsof particles into the air.

Regarding the allocated funds for dealing with air pollution in the municipality of Veles, in 2017 the biggest investment were in green areas, and the next two years in replacement of the coal fired boilers in the municipality with pellet fired boilers.

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Year	Funds	Purpose
2017	2.000.000,00 MKD.	Raising new green areas
	151.680,00 MKD.	Cleaning of illegal dumps
Total:	**2.151.680,00MKD.**	
2018	1.987.000,00MKD.	Replacement of coal heating boilers in the municipal building with pellet heating boilers (Phase I)
	2.000.000,00MKD.	Raising new green areas
	500.000,00 MKD.	Cleaning of illegal dumps
	91.335,00 MKD.	Raising public awareness
Total:	**4.578.335,00MKD.**	
2019	423.000,00 MKD.	Installation of a pellet boiler and replacement of electric boilers in the kindergarten DimceMrchev and overhaul of the boiler from oil to pellet work in MUC Stefan Gajdov
	72.000,00 MKD.	Installation of pellet burner in primary school VasilGlavinov
	2.000.000,00MKD.	Replacement of coal heating boilers in the municipal building with pellet heating boilers (II phase)
	4.500,00 MKD.	Raising new green areas
	500.000,00 MKD.	Cleaning of illegal dumps
Total:	**7.495.000,00MKD.**	

The **municipality of Veles** has prepared the Cadaster of Polluters and the Ambient Air Quality Plan (for the period 2018-2022) available on the website of the municipality of Veles www.veles.gov.mk. Inspection is

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carried out on a regular basis also in case of air pollution from the work of installations and facilities. And this would be really ambitious and progress of the local government would have been made in adopting measures for protection against air pollution when the air pollution monitoring system would work and if this was the case of institutional cooperation.

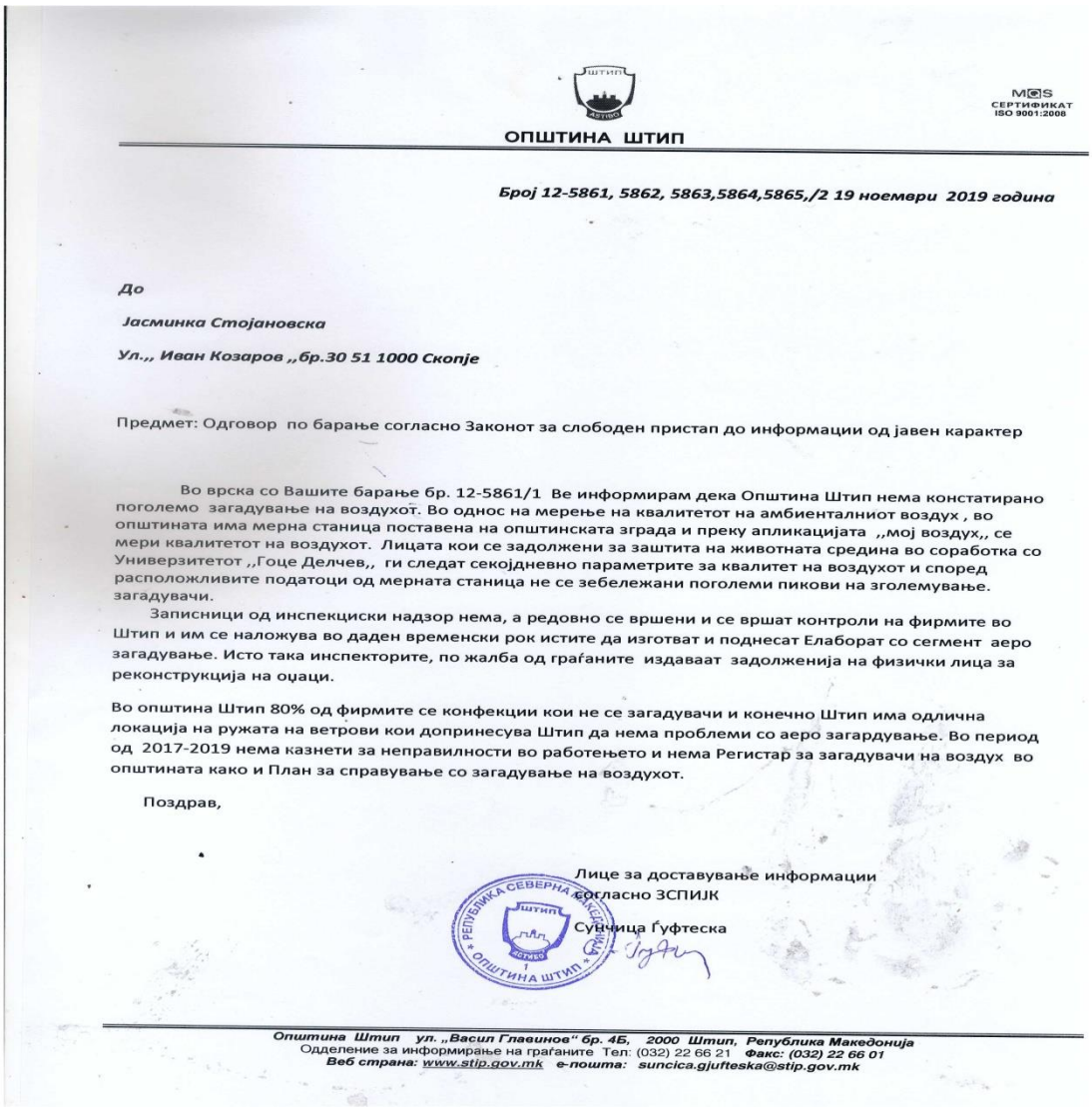
Namely, there is only one ambient air measuring station in the city and it often does not measure individual parameters, such as the dangerous PM 10 particles. The Ministry moved the second measuring station, which was located near Topilnica in Veles, a few years ago out of the city, to another location in the country. According to the Macedonian Information Agency, two to three months ago, the local government requested the Ministry of Environment to set the measuring instruments for measuring air quality, but was rejected by the Ministry on the grounds that it was not in accordance with world standards for measuring air quality. What is inspection supervision when there is no accurate information on the amount of pollutants released from the work of installations and facilities?

Regarding the penalties, for the period 2017-2019 in Veles, on 13th of November, 2019, at the session of the Settlement Commission, a fine of 50.000 Euros for the legal entity "BlagojGjorev" AD Veles was signed, due to a fire in silos for pallets. Funds go to the state budget.

We asked for answers in other municipalities as well. The **municipality of Kocani** did not allocate funds for environmental protection in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, 330,000 denars have been set aside. but it is not stated for what purpose they were spent.

Municipalities of Prilep; Stip and Sveti Nikole have not allocated funds from the budget for dealing with air pollution.The **municipality of Stip** informs that on the municipal building there is the only measuring station that measures the air quality in the city. According to the available data from the measuring station, no higher peaks of increase in the presence of polluting particles in the air were observed. There are no records of inspection. Eighty percent of the companies in Stip are clothing companies that do not pollute, but for the remaining 20 percent there is no information. There is no Register of pollutants and no Air Pollution Control Plan. The most important factor is the climate factor, which is "an excellent location for the wind rose that contributes Stip to bewithout air pollution problems".

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ОПШТИНА ШТИП

MQS СЕРТИФИКАТ ISO 9001:2008

Број 12-5861, 5862, 5863,5864,5865,/2 19 ноември 2019 година

До

Јасминка Стојановска

Ул.,, Иван Козаров ,,бр.30 51 1000 Скопје

Предмет: Одговор по барање согласно Законот за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер

Во врска со Вашите барање бр. 12-5861/1 Ве информирам дека Општина Штип нема констатирано поголемо загадување на воздухот. Во однос на мерење на квалитетот на амбиенталниот воздух , во општината има мерна станица поставена на општинската зграда и преку апликацијата ,,мој воздух,, се мери квалитетот на воздухот. Лицата кои се задолжени за заштита на животната средина во соработка со Универзитетот ,,Гоце Делчев,, ги следат секојдневно параметрите за квалитет на воздухот и според расположливите податоци од мерната станица не се забележани поголеми пикови на зголемување. загадувачи.

Записници од инспекциски надзор нема, а редовно се вршени и се вршат контроли на фирмите во Штип и им се наложува во даден временски рок истите да изготват и поднесат Елаборат со сегмент аеро загадување. Исто така инспекторите, по жалба од граѓаните издаваат задолженија на физички лица за реконструкција на оџаци.

Во општина Штип 80% од фирмите се конфекции кои не се загадувачи и конечно Штип има одлична локација на ружата на ветрови кои доприносува Штип да нема проблеми со аеро загардување. Во период од 2017-2019 нема казнети за неправилности во работењето и нема Регистар за загадувачи на воздух во општината како и План за справување со загадување на воздухот.

Поздрав,

Лице за доставување информации
согласно ЗСПИЈК

Сунчица Ѓуфтеска

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Response to the request for free access to public information Municipality of Stip

In the **municipality of Bitola** in 2019 a total of 62 inspection supervisions were carried out on legal entities that while performing their basic activities may have emissions in the air: dairies, concrete bases, printing houses, bakeries, auto repair shops and other workshops, which can generate waste which, if burned, can affect air quality. Based on the reports, 9 penalties were imposed.

The measuring stations last on the agenda

During the past period, especially in the winter, when the air pollution was highest, most of the measuring stations or certain instruments were not operational.

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Currently, within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning there is a network of 18 automatic monitoring stationsthat measure the presence of more harmful particles such as PM 10, PM 2.5, SO 2, CO, NO and O3. According to information from this network, some of the instruments need to be replaced. The question is: when they are purchased, at what price, are the metering stations regularly serviced and checked, and who is servicing them? Do they allocate funds for them according the budget plan? Is the setting of monitoring stations appropriate? Are funds allocated for setting up new monitoring stations?

We asked the relevant ministry for answers to these questions. According to the answer, all monitoring stations are in operation, but some measuring instruments installed in the stations are not functional. Each monitoring station has four to six measuring instruments (depending on the location) and they all operate independently of each other.

From the available data about how much is invested in maintenance and servicing of the instruments in the measuring stations, it can be concluded that for the period 2017-2019 for procurement of new, checking, repairing, servicing of measuring stations a total of 15,460,596 is allocated or something over 250,000 euros. That is 10 times less than the funds allocated for the same period to fight pollution by the City of Skopje. These are procurement of automated analyzers to measure PM10 particles and procurement of data collection and processing system, then spare parts for analyzers for NO-NO2-Nox analyzers for the needs of the State Automated Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System, as well as procurement of micro-analytical scales for measuring filters, dislocation of monitoring stations, design and construction of foundation with protective fence and setting of monitoring stations for ambient air quality and supply of spare parts parts for the needs of the State Automated Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System. Maintenance, servicing and calibration of measuring instruments is performed by the Ministry.

There are monitoring stations in the country that are under the jurisdiction of the **state university "Goce Delcev" from Stip. Prof. Dejan Mirakovski**, who is the head of the "**AMBIKON"** laboratory at the university clarified that their stations are research and not part of the state monitoring. They are put up for data collection for scientific purposes, and for the public interest, some of them that are in urban areas are posted on the site: ambisite.ugd.edu.mk and available through the My Air application. Some are located in cities where there are no state monitoring stations or they are not operational and functioning, as in Stip, Prilep, Kavadarci. The public has 6 available monitoring stations, while 12 are on the ground and occasionally 4 additional. On average, one station costs around € 1,000 annually and includes filters, service visits, assembly and dismantling, internet communication. The budget is allocated exclusively from the laboratory's own revenues (revenues from projects, measurements, etc.) and do not have any state funds for that purpose.

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These automatic stations, the professor explained, are made by themselves, and they have a certificate of indicative monitoring. They additionally measure the meteorological parameters. Otherwise, “AMBIKON” Lab is accredited.

What is the opinion of the experts?

Improper forecasting of budget measures and planning, irrational use, reallocation of budgetary funds allocated to tackle air pollution, unforeseen means that will follow the new positive legal norms have a major impact on the unsuccessful fight and tackling pollution. Environmental expert from the Environmental Consulting Company “DEKONS-EMA” DOO, **Menka Spirovska**, believes that the following measures should be taken to reduce air pollution: amend the regulation on the import of used vehicles and ban on the import of motor-owned vehicles lower than the EUR 5 standard; stimulating the use of public transport; establishing pedestrian zones in the downtown area, adapting the city's infrastructure for the safe and unobstructed use of bicycles, etc. She emphasized the need to hire competent, educated, experienced, trained and dedicated staff in the competent institutions, as well as to increase inspection controls to improve the judicial system, especially in the area of imposing penalties on perpetrators of environmental offenses.

Box 1:

Municipalities silent for pollution

In order to find out the state of the fight against pollution, apart from Skopje, we have sent requests for free access to public information to 19 municipalities in the country, including the City of Skopje. We received answers only from 8 municipalities, which were mostly incomplete and ambiguous. This only shows that the information that should be transparent and accessible to the general public is selectively and incompletely provided.

Box 2:

There are plans, but there is no air

The City of Skopje, in accordance with its legal obligations, has adopted two plans for ambient air, namely: Plan for air quality improvement in Skopje agglomeration, adopted by the City Council Skopje 2017. It states, among other things, that more measures require detailed planning. In addition, costs and competent authorities must be defined in more detail after the measures have been defined in detail. "The

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implementation of most of the measures to reduce emissions and concentrations of critical pollutants are long-term. With the information currently available, it was not possible to assess the detailed impact of the above measures on air quality, i.e. , on the reduction of concentrations. This requires developing realistic emission scenarios for each sector individually, including model calculations based on such scenarios ", the Plan said.

A Short Term Action Planfor Ambient Air Protection in the City of Skopje and the Municipalities of the City of Skopje, adopted by the City Council of Skopje 2017, has also been adopted. According to this plan, "alert thresholds have been set in order to protect the population from harmful exposure to increased concentrations of pollutants." In addition to the information measures outlined in the previous chapter, exceeding the alert threshold should entail other extraordinary measures to rapidly reduce exposure to very high concentrations of pollutants. As in the previous plan, possible extraordinary measures that could be implemented in Skopje have not been identified in detail, as all measures require detailed planning or changes to national legislation. There is also no assessment of the effects of these measures due to the need for further planning.

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