



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI
ȘI SCHIMBĂRILOR CLIMATICE

Cabinet of the Minister

Reg.No.: 4072/AK/26.08.2014

Subject: EIA procedure for the investment proposal "*Gravel and Sand Extraction from Alluvial Sediments in the Bed of the Danube River, Mishka Section (462.0 km - 459.4 km), in the area of Babovo Village, Slivo Pole Municipality, Rouse Region*"

Dear Minister,

Following your letter no. OBOC - 74 dated 22nd of July 2014 regarding the Assignment (ToR) on the scope of Environmental Impact Assessment Report on investment proposal "*Gravel and Sand Extraction from Alluvial Sediments in the Bed of the Danube River, Mishka Section (462.0 km - 459.4 km), in the area of Babovo Village, Slivo Pole Municipality, Rouse Region*" we would like to submit the following comments:

- The location of the project. The document provided only geographic coordinates in grades, minutes and seconds which is difficult for analyzing. Taking into account that both Romania and Bulgaria use the same coordinates system (Stereo 70), the coordinates should be provided in this system or in a coordinate system easy for use. Nevertheless, based on transformation of coordinates done in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) it results that half of the points are located in Romania, not in Bulgaria.
- A map of the project location in relation to protected areas/Natura 2000 sites (both Romanian and Bulgarian) is not provided. On the Romanian side, in the vicinity of the project there are located two Natura 2000 sites: ROSCI0088 Gura Vedei - Șaica - Slobozia (under Habitats Directive) and ROSPA 0090 Ostrovu Lung - Gostinu (under Birds Directive).
- Sturgeon monitoring baseline data is incomplete (e.g. "The presence of bastard sturgeon in the Bulgarian stretch of the Danube needs scientific confirmation"). Also, the data for other sturgeon species is too general and is not specific for the location of project. Thus, the impact of further activity, will be difficult to assess.
- Regarding the *Chapter 5. Flora and Fauna. Protected areas and zones*, paragraph 5.2. *Protected territories and Zones* we consider that this paragraph should be completed by specifying all the protected areas of national interest in both countries as well as the areas of EU importance. The paragraph refers only to the Bulgarian's section, and no remarks are given for Romanian side even if in the vicinity of proposed project there are located more Natura 2000 sites. Also, a location map of the project in relation to protected areas is not provided.
- The Natura 2000 sites are officially approved by Romanian national legislation (Ministerial Order 2387/2011 for SCIs and GD 971/2011 for SPAs). Relevant

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information (shape-files and Standard data forms) are available on the MECC website (http://mmediu.ro/new/?page_id=5178).

- The Scope of Assignment document does not specify the need for developing appropriate assessment according to art. 6(3) of Habitats Directive. However, we would like that all the species and habitats of EU interest to be considered in the documentation, also during the execution phase of the project. The assessment should identify the project's impact on species and habitats, including periods of migration of fish species, especially sturgeons and *Alosa immaculata* (*Alosa pontica*).
- Considering that excavation may result in changing the Danube river bed, change of currents, etc., it should also be taken into account the impact on downstream and neighboring sites in areas directly affected.
- The document does not refer to EC guide on "Non-energy extractive activities and Natura 2000", available in English, Romanian and Bulgarian on the EC website (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/nee_i_n2000_guidance.pdf). This guide is an indicative document recommended by EC in analysis of environmental impact assessment for non-energy extractive activities.
- The Scope of Assignment document should require the identification of compensatory measures if the impact on species and habitats is significant, as well as alternative solutions in terms of biodiversity, location of sorting stations and technology used.
- In addition, the document should also include the observations proposed by Bulgarian stakeholders, especially those included in the letters no. 378/07.04.2014 of Basin Directorate for Water Management Danube Region with Center Pleven, no. 168/04.04.2014 of Regional Museum of History - Rousse, and no. 036/28.03.2014 of Friendly Support Foundation.

The Romanian Naval Authority has required the following:

- For safety reasons it is compulsory that the working areas between *462.0 km - 459.4 km* is properly signaled, as well as the signaling of the dredging (excavation) installations according to the Navigation on the Danube River Regulation.
- The issue of a Notice to the Romanian Naval Authority informing about the beginning of the works.

Please accept, Mr. Minister, the assurance of my highest consideration and esteem.
Yours sincerely,

Attila KORODI

MINISTER

H. E. Mr. Stanislav Anastassov
Minister of Environment and Water,
Republic of Bulgaria