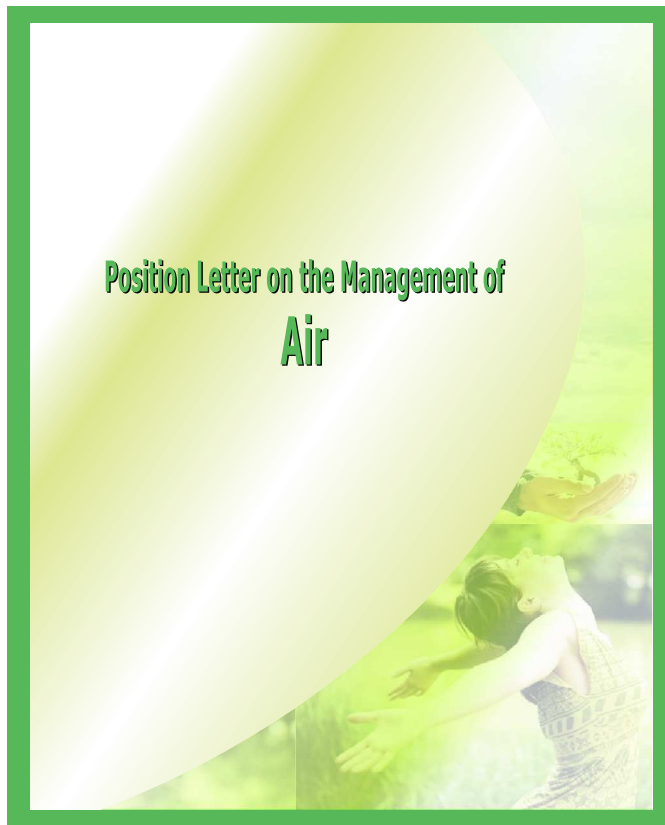


Position Letter on the Management of  
**Air**



During the program: "Strengthening the Albanian Civil Society for an Improved Environment", Milieucontact International aims to stimulate cooperation among key stakeholders, through several activities addressed in national and local level. We do think and believe that civil society can have a great impact in the environment quality, not as intervening rather then actively participating in policy and decision making for environmental issues.

This position paper is compiled by working group on *Air*, with the participation of experts of the field, NGO members, and representatives of local government or institutions.

This working group was supported and mandated from the Albanian environmental NGOs, during their annual Strategy Meeting, offering at the same time input and expertise in each respective fields of Water, Waste, Air and Public Participation.

The position paper is prepared in the frame of the program: "Strengthening the Albanian Civil Society for an Improved Environment", financially supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Tirana.

### **Introduction**

This position paper is addressed to:

Lawmakers, central and local government, public and health Institutions, business (Chamber of Commerce) and international Institutions and it expresses the thoughts and the desire of NGOs, intellectuals, citizens and the media to contribute to the improvement of air quality by achieving the standards, as part of the quality of life.

The Sector of environmental NGO-s in Albania has identified as a necessity the information of the public on the actual situation regarding the urban air, and raising the public awareness in order to address the issues of urban air to the decision makers and international institutions etc, and to also exercise pressure on them regarding respecting the national and European norms on air pollutants, in order to undertake the necessary legal, administrative and technological measures, for achieving the improvement of air quality, and life quality, as well as corresponding standards.

During the meeting organized in December 2006<sup>1</sup>, among different environmental NGO-s, as a priority for this sector was identified the support for the government in fulfilling the legal obligations in relation to greater monitoring and regular information (not less then every 3 months) to the general public on the concentration of some indicators (O<sub>3</sub>; SO<sub>2</sub>; NO<sub>x</sub>; CO; Solid Materials and Pb).

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<sup>1</sup> National Meeting of the Albanian Environmental NGOs

As a follow-up to this initiative, during the National Meeting of December 2008, the NGO-s mandated a working group, which plays the role of the Secretariat of the environmental NGOs.

The meetings of the Secretariat have been facilitated by Milieukontakt and information on best European practices has been utilized, information which has been obtained through contacts with the respective networks of NGOs. The position paper shall act as an action platform for the compilation of campaigns for environmental NGOs, which aim at improving the Air quality, so that all of us live with human dignity in a healthy environment.

#### **Actual situation**

According to the Report on the State of Environment 2005-2007 of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Administration of Waters "On the Monitoring of Air", the air quality in large urban areas results as below:

- ↳ Even though the concentrations of suspended particulate matter (SPM) have been decreasing in the last years, they are problematic because their concentrations, referring to the Institute of Public Health monitoring [IPH], continue to be above the allowed norms of the Albanian Standard and the EU standard.
- ↳ The concentrations of the other monitored pollutants (SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, Pb) result within the allowed norms of the Albanian Standard and the EU

standard but with a trend of increasing concentrations for all the monitoring stations, if data of several years in continuation are compared.

↳ Based on the same report the acoustic pollution remains problematic in the urban areas where resides over 30% of the population, and where over 60 % of vehicles circulate.

↳ Also, in the Report there are not given accurate data on the amount of deforestation, but the figures declared are taken from before 50 years. Nevertheless from the inventory and other studies conducted by the World Bank it results that the damages caused in forests by illegal activities, forest fires, alienation of forest areas in land for other usage and lack of law enforcement are catastrophic, with severe consequences in destroying ecological equilibriums.

#### **The Analyses of the Situation.**

There are four factors of the Air Pollution: cities growth, not applying the principles of sustainable development in business, the increased energy consumption from fossil fuels (coal, petrol etc) and the increase road traffic intensity.

The high level of pollution come as a consequence of :

- x Not applying modern technologies in the production of goods and in the un-interrupted control of air pollutants,
- x Low quality of the fuel

- x Non-competitive and uncomfortable service of public transportation
- x Bad urban planning of our cities
- x Corruption at the institutions dealing with management and monitoring of high or average level of air pollutants;
  - Contradiction between the law and the law enforcement
  - Low level of qualification and lack of responsibility of the staff working in the air sector (political nominations instead of professional nominations);
- x Bad management of the forests and the decrease of the areas and greenery crowns in the inhabited areas;
  - Burning of urban wastes
- x Usage of the generators for the production of the energy
- x Lack of implementation for the principles on sustainable development;
  - Low involvement level of the health and environmental components in the policies on transport, space and urban planning;
- x Low level of environmental awareness among the decision makers and the public;

#### **Conclusions**

We are concerned on air because its pollution decreases the lifespan of the population, increases the level of diseases especially among the children and vulnerable groups and decreases the quality of life.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the study of WHO: "In the European Union, because of air pollution and the concentration of substances (PM<sub>10</sub>) the life of every individual is decrease by 9,6 months (Report of 2005)"

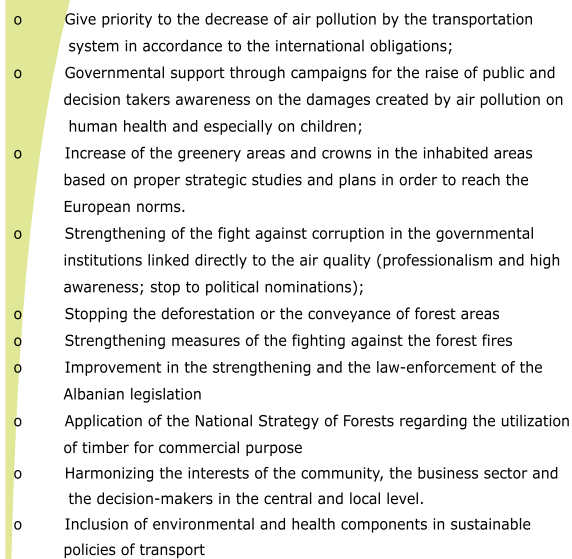
Although the situation is known by the politicians of all political wings, who have been in power before or are in power now, the time has shown that nothing has changed in the manner of treating the vital issue of air, of this polluted air which all of us equally are breathing it as polluted as it is, with an unseen indifference

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Administration of Waters, as the institution in charge for environmental issues, of the policies and control of air quality, and as the coordinator of different scientific institution, has the main responsible body for the actual situation.

**REQUESTS** by the civil society

We, members of the civil society, with the aim of not postponing for any more moment the raising in an all-national level the concern of everybody about the improvement of air quality, for the time period of five years request the following:

- o Decrease the level of emissions of the problematic pollutants in the air (LNP, PM10) within the Albanian norms in accordance to the EU Directives;
- o Increase the number of measurements of the indicators of air pollution in accordance to the EU requests;

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- o Give priority to the decrease of air pollution by the transportation system in accordance to the international obligations;
  - o Governmental support through campaigns for the raise of public and decision takers awareness on the damages created by air pollution on human health and especially on children;
  - o Increase of the greenery areas and crowns in the inhabited areas based on proper strategic studies and plans in order to reach the European norms.
  - o Strengthening of the fight against corruption in the governmental institutions linked directly to the air quality (professionalism and high awareness; stop to political nominations);
  - o Stopping the deforestation or the conveyance of forest areas
  - o Strengthening measures of the fighting against the forest fires
  - o Improvement in the strengthening and the law-enforcement of the Albanian legislation
  - o Application of the National Strategy of Forests regarding the utilization of timber for commercial purpose
  - o Harmonizing the interests of the community, the business sector and the decision-makers in the central and local level.
  - o Inclusion of environmental and health components in sustainable policies of transport





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