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ORGANIZIRAN UPOR CIVILNE DRUŽBE KOT OMEJITVENI DEJAVNIK ŠIRITVE »UMAZANE« INDUSTRIJE IN EDINO ZAGOTOVILO ZA IMPLEMENTACIJO AARHUŠKE KONVENCIJE

Civilne iniciative Celja so ustanovljene zaradi legitimne in legalne zahteve za sanacijo degradirane Celjske kotline ter preprečevanja dodatnega onesnaževanja okolja. Sinteza vseh v preteklosti opravljenih raziskav in znanstvenih analiz, ki smo jih dali narediti, dokazujejo huda »stara« onesnaženja okolja in aktualna onesnaženja, ki dokazano ogrožajo zdravje ljudi. Ljudje v Celjski kotlini nimamo z Ustavo Republike Slovenije zagotovljene pravice do bivanja v zdravem okolju.

Onesnažen zrak s težkimi kovinami zastruplja in mori ljudi, saj kar 80 ljudi na leto umre zaradi tega, ker niso sprejeti ukrepi za zmanjšanje onesnaženja s prašnimi delci PM 10. Ozon v okolju negativne posledice onesnaženih prašnih delcev PM10 in PM 2,5 še poslabša. Onesnažene podzemne vode dolgoročno in nepopravljivo onesnažujejo okolje.

En vzorec je imel pri temperaturi zraka minus 13 stopinj Celzija ponoči januarja 2009 kar 20 stopinj Celzija. Vzorec podzemne vode je imel nad določljivostjo spektrografskega analizatorja železa in bil označen kot neprimeren za pranje avtomobilov zaradi vsebnosti kloridov. Odvzeti vzorci so imeli vonj po žveplovih spojinah in vsi so bili označeni kot nepitni. Z nitrati in drugimi strupi onesnažena pitna voda iz zajetja v Medlogu je nujno potrebna čiščenja, da je sploh uporabna za preskrbo ljudi. Onesnaženi reki Hudinja in Voglajna sta v četrtem kakovostnem razredu in sta zastrupljeni s težkimi kovinami in vsemi mogočimi strupi, ki se izlivajo v Savinjo.

V Celju imamo tudi najbolj onesnaženo območje v Sloveniji, območje stare Cinkarne, kjer je izmerjenih kar 593 mg/kg s. s. kadmija v zemlji, in to poleg drugih strupov, kar je zagotovo žalosten svetovni rekord v urbanem območju. Onesnaženo območje stare Cinkarne je označeno za slovenski Černobil.

Lokalna oblast pa je dovolila navoz več tisoč ton gradbenih odpadkov in strupov z območja stare Cinkarne na travnik zraven hiš v Bukovžlaku, s temi se dokazano zastruplja zrak in podtalnico, saj ta črna deponija leži nad pomembnimi podzemnimi vodnimi viri Celja. Dokazano smo ogroženi s suhim odlaganjem titanove sadre na deponiji Za travnikom, saj to onesnaženo prašenje nosi daleč okoli in zastruplja s težkimi kovinami naravo in ljudi.

V našem okolju smo nenehno izpostavljeni hudim »stoletnim« poplavam, ki pa se pri nas ponavljajo na osem let in prav tako ogrožajo okolje in vplivajo na hudo psihosocialno stisko ljudi. Lokalna oblast pa si je v popolnoma degradiranem okolju dovolila graditi sežigalnico komunalnih odpadkov in blata

iz komunalne čistilne naprave, ki dodatno onesnažuje okolje, saj je naša kotlina obremenjena s temperaturno inverzijo kar 114 dni v letu.

Vsa ta dejstva so povzročila 25 odstotkov večjo umrljivost za rakom leta 2003 in 30 odstotkov večjo umrljivost za rakom leta 2004, kot je povprečje v Sloveniji. »Sindrom žetve« imenujejo tako velika in alarmantna odstopanja v umrljivosti populacije, ko najbolj ogrožen, bolan in ranljiv del prebivalstva umre v zelo kratkem času. V vseh populacijskih strukturah prebivalstva so bolezni dihal na prvem mestu.

Kapital, ob strinjanju politike, pa je hotel v naši krajevni skupnosti zgraditi še krematorij za 1000 kremiranj/leto in asfaltno bazo ter obrat za reciklažo gradbenih odpadkov in betona v naselju Začret. Na Ljubečni, zraven spalnega naselja, pa so želeli umestiti grosistično-transportno logistični center, visok 45 metrov, za oskrbovanje približno 600 kamionov na dan, z utemeljitvijo, da tako izredno povečan promet in onesnaženje s kamioni ne bosta pomembno poslabšala življenjske razmere ljudi.

Samo izredno učinkovito organiziranje in zbiranje podpisov nasprotovanja tem ekološko spornim projektom je preprečilo nenasiten interes kapitala in politike, ki dela tako neodgovorno z okoljem in ogroža zdravje ljudi. Z lobiranjem pri političnih strankah v mestnem svetu občine pa smo dosegli, da so propadli projekti, ki bi dodatno ogrožali zdravje ljudi. Tako smo si ljudje sami izborili, da smo tudi z analizami in znanstvenimi študijami, ki smo jih sami plačali, dokazovali, da ekološko sporni projekti ne spadajo v popolnoma degradirano okolje Celjske kotline. Ko smo se ob evidentnem ogrožanju okolja obračali na inšpekcijo za okolje, so se razglasili za nepristojne za ukrepanje in celo enkrat zagrozili s kaznijo 500 evrov, če ne bomo nemudoma javili vseh podatkov o navozu strupov na črno deponijo v Bukovžlaku pred tremi leti.

Takrat so bili od neposredno prizadetih prebivalcev takoj obveščeni, da nevarne odpadke vozijo na travnik zraven hiš, pa niso ukrepali in preprečili tega kriminalnega in barbarskega dejanja.

Vseskozi smo se obračali na državne organe in javne zavode, da smo dobili relevantne podatke, in kar nekajkrat tudi s posredovanjem informacijske pooblaščenke pridobili vse dokumente, ki so skupaj dali strašljivo podobo o vseh onesnaženjih okolja in poraznem zdravstvenem stanju ljudi. Demokratična pravica do obveščenosti je nujen pogoj, da civilna družba sploh ve, kaj se dogaja v okolju. Analize in raziskave, ki so opravljene z javnim denarjem, te podatke že same po sebi naredijo javno dostopne. Velikokrat pa moramo tudi odgovorne spomniti, naj si preberejo Aarhuško konvencijo, ki jo je Slovenija ratificirala in s tem obvezala, da ima tako posameznik kot organizirana civilna družba nesporno pravico do sodelovanja že pri načrtovanju in umeščanju spornih okoljskih projektov. S tem se lahko nesprejemljive projekte v okolju ustavi pred samo gradnjo. V Civilnih iniciativah Celja nismo proti novim industrijskim in poslovnim projektom, smo pa proti širitvi umazane industrije in proti nadaljnjemu zastrupljanju ljudi, predvsem zaradi izkušenj v preteklosti.

V 21. stoletju je nujno razvijati družbo, ki bo temeljila na sonaravnem in trajnostnem razvoju, kjer ne bodo ogroženi naravni viri in zdravje ljudi. Napredek ne sme biti povezan z dodatnim obremenjevanjem okolja. V Celju je treba uvesti ničelno stopnjo tolerance do vseh onesnaževalcev, ker je Celje dokazano najbolj onesnaženo mesto Slovenije.

Ko je merilo za napredek družbe vsakršno delovno mesto, naj bo še tako sporno z okoljskega vidika, se moramo ljudje upreti tako nespametni politiki, ki izčrpa in obremenjuje okolje. V Sloveniji je veliko umazane industrije, ki ne spada v 21. stoletje in našo z naravnimi lepotami posejano deželo.

Slovenijo, biser Evrope, se moramo potruditi narediti še lepšo, sanirati stare težave z onesnaženji in jo vrniti našim potomcem čistejšo, kot smo jo dobili od svojih očetov.

Naši lokalni veljaki, ki so dobili mandat na volitvah za upravljanje premoženja skupnosti, pa se ukvarjajo z vladanjem in plenjenjem še preostalega (prej družbenega) bogastva. Ker imamo 210 občinskih okoljskih politik, kot je občin in županov, imamo stihijsko in nenačrtno politiko gospodarjenja s prostorom, nekritično se pozidava tudi najboljša kmetijska zemljišča. Imamo le še 800 m² na prebivalca obdelovalne zemlje, kar nikakor ne zadošča za prehransko samopreskrbo prebivalstva. Z 80-odstotne prehranske samooskrbe pred petnajstimi leti smo padli na 45-odstotno samooskrbo s pridelano hrano, kar je skrajno skrb vzbujajoče in nedopustno iz strateškega interesa preživetja slovenskega naroda. Ko pa se ta preostala kmetijska zemljišča zastruplja še z izpusti kemijske industrije in drugih virov, je naša prihodnost zelo črnogleda. Če smo imeli v Celjski kotlini pred dvajsetimi leti 6000 ha prekomerno onesnažene zemlje in od tega 2200 ha obdelovalne, imamo zdaj 7000 ha prekomerno onesnažene zemlje, od tega 2800 ha obdelovalne zemlje, na kateri vsa leta pridelujejo pridelke in s to onesnaženo hrano zastrupljajo prebivalstvo.

Torej, tudi to dokazuje, da se stanje onesnaženja okolja slabša, ne boljša, kot si celo dovolijo zavajati lokalni politiki, da bi lahko še naprej vladali ljudem.

Za to je nujno potrebno delovanje civilne družbe, ki je v razvitih državah korektiv nebrzdanemu interesu kapitala in politike. Nujno je dosledno upoštevanje prizadetih prebivalcev pri načrtovanju in umeščanju objektov ter dejavnosti, ki obremenjujejo okolje in ogrožajo zdravje ljudi. Odgovorni pa morajo omogočiti nadzor nad poročili o vplivih na okolje, ki so sestavni del projektov, in takoj odvzeti pooblastila tistim »strokovnjakom«, ki v korist vlagatelja prilagajajo neverodostojna poročila. Žal v Sloveniji še nimamo tradicije spoštovanja in podpore civilne družbe, ki deluje na področju okoljevarstva. Svojo dejavnost v celoti financiramo sami, deležni pa smo celo podcenjevanja in osebne diskreditacije.

Trdno upam, da je tudi ta konferenca korak k spremembi neprimernega odnosa do civilne družbe v Sloveniji in pomemben mejnik pri dejanskem izvajanju Aarhuške konvencije, ki zagotavlja javnosti pravico do obveščenosti. Samo verodostojno obveščena javnost pa je lahko kvalificiran sogovornik lokalnim oblastnikom in lastnikom kapitala, ki jim lastna materialna korist pomeni več kot družbeno odgovoren odnos do narave in ljudi.

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ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY RESISTANCE AS A FACTOR LIMITING THE SPREAD OF “DIRTY” INDUSTRY AND THE ONLY GUARANTEE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AARHUS CONVENTION

The Civil Initiatives of Celje was set up owing to the legitimate and legal requirement for the rehabilitation of the degraded Celje basin, and in order to prevent additional environmental pollution. A synthesis of all the research and scientific analysis performed in the past and commissioned by the Civil Initiatives of Celje, shows the serious “old” pollution and the current pollution, which is demonstrably threatening human health. People in the Celje basin do not enjoy the right to live in a healthy environment, as provided by the Slovenian Constitution.

Air polluted with heavy metals poisons and kills people, with as many as 80 people a year dying from this, because measures have not been taken to reduce pollution with PM 10 dust particles. The ozone present in the environment is exacerbating the negative consequences of PM10 and PM 2.5 contaminated dust particles.

Polluted groundwater is polluting the environment in the long term and irretrievably, and one sample taken on a night in January 2009 recorded at minus 13 Celsius had a temperature of 20 degrees Celsius. The groundwater sample had an iron level above the determining capacity of the spectrographic analyser, and was labelled as unsuitable for washing cars owing to its chloride content. The samples had the odour of sulphur compounds and were all labelled as non-potable.

Drinking water from the Medlog catchment that is contaminated with nitrates and other poisons must be urgently treated in order to even be usable for human water supply.

The polluted rivers Hudinja and Voglajna are in the fourth bracket of quality, and have been contaminated with heavy metals and all manner of poisons, which flow into the Savinja.

Celje also has the most polluted site in Slovenia, the site of the old Zinc Works, where concentrations of as much as 593 mg/kg s.s cadmium have been measured in the earth, alongside other poisons, and this is certainly a sad world record in terms of urban sites. The polluted site of the old Zinc Works has been labelled the Slovenian Chernobyl.

However the local authority permitted the hauling in of thousands of tons of construction waste and poisons from the site of the old Zinc Works to a meadow next to houses in Bukovžlak, and this is demonstrably poisoning the air and groundwater, since this illicit dump lies above important groundwater sources for Celje.

It has been demonstrated that we are threatened with the dry dumping of titanium gypsum at the Za Travnikom disposal site, since the contaminated dust it generates is carried far around and poisons nature and people with heavy metals.

In the local environment we are constantly exposed to serious floods “of the century”, which tend to repeat here every eight years, and this also threatens the environment and contributes to the serious psychological and social stress on people.

The local authority has meanwhile allowed itself to build in a completely degraded environment a municipal waste and sewage sludge incinerator, which is additionally polluting the environment, since the geographical basin here is burdened with temperature inversion for as many as 114 days a year.

All the stated facts caused 25% higher mortality from cancer in 2003, and 30% higher cancer-related mortality in 2004 than the average for Slovenia. The “reaper syndrome” is the name given to the large and alarming variance in the mortality rate, when the most at-risk, sick and vulnerable sections of the population die in a very short time. In all population structures, respiratory diseases are in first place.

Meanwhile capital interests, with the blessing of the politicians, sought to build for us in the local community a crematorium for 1,000 cremations a year and an asphalt depot, plus a plant for recycling construction waste and concrete in the village of Začret. At Ljubečna, next to a dormitory settlement, they wanted to locate a wholesale transport and logistics centre standing 45 metres high, for loading around 600 lorries a day, with the reasoning that such an extraordinary increase in traffic and pollution from lorries would not significantly affect people’s living conditions.

Only the exceptionally effective organisation and collection of signatures in opposition to these environmentally controversial projects blocked the insatiable interests of capital and politics, which are acting so irresponsibly with the environment and threatening human health. By lobbying the political parties in the City Council, however, we were able to ensure that the projects that would additionally threaten human health, were “non-starters”. In other words ordinary people fought back and showed, through analyses and scientific studies that we paid for ourselves, that environmentally controversial projects do not belong in the completely degraded environment of the Celje basin.

When we approached the environmental inspectors, given the clear threat to the environment, they declared themselves to have no jurisdiction to act, and once even threatened us with a fine of 500 euros, if we did not immediately offer up all the data relating to the hauling in of poisons to the illicit dump at Bukovžlak three years earlier.

At that time they were informed by the directly affected residents that hazardous waste was being brought to the meadow beside the houses, but they took no action to prevent this criminal and barbaric act.

We constantly approached state authorities and public institutes to obtain relevant information, and quite a few times, including through the mediation of the Information Commissioner, we obtained all the documents that, put together, showed an appalling picture of all the environmental pollution and the calamitous state of people’s health. The democratic right to being informed is an essential condition for the civil society to have any idea of what is going on in the environment. The analysis and research performed with public money by their very nature “make” this information publicly accessible. Often, however, we have to remind those responsible to peruse the Aarhus Convention, which Slovenia ratified and thereby undertook to ensure that both individuals and organised civil

society groups have the undisputed right to participate in the planning and locating of controversial environmental projects. In this way, unacceptable projects in the environment can be stopped before the actual construction. The Civil Initiatives of Celje are not against new industrial and commercial projects, but we are opposed to the spread of dirty industry and against the continued poisoning of people, especially given the past experiences.

In the 21st century it is essential to develop a society that will be based on nature-friendly and sustainable development, where natural resources and human health will not be threatened. Progress should not be tied to additional burdening of the environment. In Celje we need to introduce zero tolerance for all polluters, since Celje is demonstrably the most polluted city in Slovenia.

Where the measure of progress in a society is any kind of job, no matter how questionable in environmental terms, ordinary people must resist such unwise policies that exhaust and burden the environment.

In Slovenia there is plenty of dirty industry, which does not belong in the 21st century or in our country, which otherwise has its fair share of natural beauty.

We must endeavour to make Slovenia, a jewel of Europe, even more beautiful, and to remediate old problems of pollution and “return” it to our descendants in a cleaner state than we received it from our fathers.

Our local bigwigs, who won a mandate in the elections to manage the community property, are involved however in controlling and plundering the remaining (previously socially-owned) wealth.

Since we have 210 municipal environmental policies, the same as the number of municipalities and mayors, we have a blind and uncoordinated policy of spatial management, and even the best agricultural land is being built on without reservation. We have a mere 800 m² per inhabitant of cultivable land left, and this in no way suffices for the population to be self-sufficient in food. From a level of 80% food self-sufficiency 15 years ago, we have “fallen” to 45% self-sufficiency in the food we produce, which is extremely worrying and unacceptable in terms of the strategic interest of survival of the Slovenian nation. And when this remaining agricultural land is being poisoned by emissions from the chemical industry and other sources, our future looks very bleak. Where 20 years ago the Celje basin had 6000 ha of excessively polluted land, of which 2200 ha was under cultivation, we now have 7000 ha of excessively polluted land, of which 2800 ha is cultivated land, on which produce has been grown all these years, and this contaminated food is poisoning the population.

In other words, this fact also demonstrates that the state of environmental pollution is deteriorating and not improving, as the local politicians are even allowing to be spread around, in order to be able to keep ruling over people.

For this reason the operation of the civil society is essential, since in developed countries it acts as a corrective force to the unbridled interests of capital and politics.

Consistent account needs to be taken of affected members of the population in the planning and locating of facilities and activities that burden the environment and threaten human health. And those responsible must enable monitoring of environmental impact reports, which are a constituent part of projects, and immediately withdraw authorisation from those “experts” who adapt non-credible reports for the benefit of investors.

Sadly, however, in Slovenia we have no tradition of respect and support for the civil society operating in the field of environmental protection. We finance our activities entirely on our own, yet we are subject even to denigration and personal discrediting.

I firmly hope that this Conference will also be a step towards change in the inappropriate attitude to the civil society in Slovenia, and an important milestone in the proper implementation of the Aarhus Convention, which ensures for the public the right to information. Only a credibly informed public can act as a qualified partner in speaking to local authorities and owners of capital, to whom their own material benefit means more than a socially responsible attitude to nature and people.