



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

ENVIRONMENT

Directorate B – Protecting the Natural Environment

ENV.B.4 - Cohesion Policy & Environmental Impact Assessments

The Head of Unit

09. 10. 2009

Brussels,

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Mr. Aleksandar Vesic, Chair,
Bureau, Convention on Environmental Impact
Assessment in a Transboundary Context
E-mail: aleksandar.vesic@ekoserb.sr.gov.yu
Cc: Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin, UNECE Espoo
Secretariat
E-mail: Nicholas.Bonvoisin@unece.org

Dear Mr. Vesic,

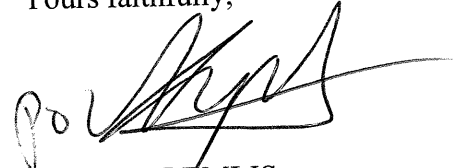
I would like to thank you for your letter regarding the NGOs' awareness raising related to the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991 Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Protocol).

Indeed, the NGOs play an important role in linking the civil society with the government in the decision-making process related to environmental issues, and in particular in the transboundary environmental assessment procedures. Hence, the NGOs are key stakeholders in ensuring a structured dialogue between citizens and governments. Therefore, I would like to highlight that the European Commission and DG Environment have been working with the NGOs in order to ensure transparency, effectiveness and accountability of the decisions taken in the environmental field.

Taking into account that the Espoo Convention supports environmentally sound and sustainable development by providing information on the interrelationship between certain economic activities and their environmental consequences in a transboundary context, as well as ensuring public participation, the Commission Services pay particular attention on the public involvement and participation in the relevant procedures. It should be acknowledged that the Commission's role, being the *Guardian of the Treaties*, is to ensure that compliance with the respective legislation has been achieved by each Member State. In addition, it should be noted that the Commission supports the application of the European Principles for Environment, through which several key European financial institutions contribute to implementation of the EC environmental *acquis*, including on impact assessment, in the countries closest to the EU.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the Commission will continue closely to follow the involvement of the public in the transboundary impact assessment procedure and the participation of the NGOs therein.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georges Kremlis', written over a horizontal line.

Georges KREMLIS

Cc: HANLEY Nicholas; BURRILL Anne (ENV).