

Name of Exercise: EIA for the construction of highway D1 between Presov and Hybe

Location: Presov municipality, Slovakia

Participation Exercise under which Article? *Article 6*

Purpose of Participation Exercise:
The planning of the construction of highway D1 between Presov and Hybe.

Background:

This highway passes through Presov municipality and the route has a significant impact on the environment. Due to this fact, several possible routes were considered. A public participation procedure was held under Slovak National Council law No.127/1994 on the assessment of impacts on the environment.

Participation Techniques Used:

The plan for the road was open to the public for three weeks in the Department of the Environment at the Municipal Authority Office in Presov. The public could study the issues and ask for information and also make copies of the plan. Comments were allowed to be sent to the Ministry of the Environment within five weeks. Due to the fact that the planned highway construction passes through residential areas, public participation at the planning stage was considered to be important.

Who participated?

The process was open to non governmental organisations with the same conditions as for the public. The process did not go beyond that required under the framework of the law. The Presov municipality department of the environment, prepared for a meeting of 300 participants; however only 30 inhabitants participated. It was not specified who was either from NGO or other organisation, or participated in an individual capacity.

Stage(s) at which public participated in the process:

The public participation process started with the elaborated plan of the proposed construction. After delivery of the plan, the Municipality Authority Office in Presov informed the public about the elaborated plan through the local newspaper, local radio and by placing the plan on the official information board.

In the second stage, the construction investor prepared an assessment report, which deals in detail with the highway project and its impact on the environment. This stage takes account of relevant comments from the stage before.

The Municipal Authority Office in Presov informed the public about the assessment report and allowed the public to study it and make extracts from it for the next month. In both cases, this process was free of charge. During that one month period, the Municipality of Presov also arranged a public hearing on the assessment report. The public was informed of this hearing through announcements in regional daily newspapers, on radio and on information boards. Representatives of the state administrative bodies, scientific authorities, the investor and the Municipal Authority Office Presov attended the hearing. There were 30 individuals participating in the hearing. It was not specified who was from an NGO. All collected comments were considered and were used and taken into account in the further proceedings. The minutes of the meeting were very brief and general and were not publicised.

What information was made available?

All the information was available to the public. The plan included the basic characteristics of the construction and basic information about the present state of the environment. It also contained data about the expected impacts on particular areas and a basic evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed alternatives. Finally, there were measures to reduce or eliminate the negative impacts.

What was the outcome of the public participation exercise?

Only members of the public from those areas directly affected by the proposed routes of the highway took part, even though the procedure was open for anybody. Their opinions and comments were answered as

far as possible and were taken into account within the approval process. They were also included in the report of the public proceedings.

A review and final opinion about the project was made by the Ministry of the Environment. The Municipality of Presov, after delivery of the material, informed the public with the possibility to study and make extracts from it. Majority of people interested and participated in the process were satisfied with result.

Comments of participants in the process:

Not available. According to the authorities, people are not yet interested in activities which do not concern them directly. Other, mostly economic problems and problems to survive prevail.

Contact: Mr. Draganovsky Jozef
Address: City Council of Presov, Hlavna 73, 080 66 Presov, Slovak republik
Phone: (4 21) 91 77 31 019
Fax: (4 21) 91 733 665

REC view on participation exercise:

On the surface the procedure followed appears to meet most of the requirements of Article 6. The municipality made a concerted effort to involve people in the decision-making process, yet it was not strong enough to involve more than 30 people. This appears to be due to a relative lack of interest of the general population and a preoccupation with economic issues. There is no information as to whether the members of the public were satisfied with the process or its results, factors which may be relevant in evaluating the effectiveness of the public participation. However, the Municipality appears to have followed all necessary steps in the process to inform the public and give opportunities for public participation.

Significant omissions from requirements of Article 6:

None, based on available information.