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HIGHLIGHTS

A NEW OLD ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTION

On April 19, 2017, the Government approved new regulation on State Environmental Inspectorate of Ukraine (the replaced regulation was approved by the President of Ukraine and seems to be still in force).

Recently Ostap Semerak, the Minister of Environment of Ukraine, has made several statements about the plans to reform state environmental inspection. Yet, those reforms are not reflected in the new regulation. New regulation aims only at implementing new legislation in this area.

At the same time some novelties are present already. Changes include: restriction or suspension of business activity is now possible only by a court decision, while environmental inspectorate is entrusted to file such lawsuits (accordingly, the inspection can no longer seal premises or take decisions lifting suspension); territorial bodies of the inspection will not be necessarily present in every oblast (region) (this is in line with announced earlier district approach); new procedure for appointing head of the inspectorate.

Thus, announced reform was not reflected in the new regulation but is still on the agenda. The public awaits adoption of the concept for creating a new state environmental protection service.

EU ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND LAW: DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO RECEIVE A PERIODIC REVIEW

Resource & Analysis Center "Society and Environment" launches a new project "Promoting European Reforms in the Field of Environment and Climate Change in Ukraine" with the support of the European Union and International Renaissance Foundation in the framework of "Civil Synergy" project. Our new project foresees regular review of the news and trends of the EU environmental policy and law making, information support in the implementation of the Association Agreement and strengthening a dialogue on relevant issues of environmental and climate policy and law, as well as policy analysis in these areas. All products will be made public through our Facebook page and website www.rac.org.ua.

To bring you all relevant news about EU environmental and climate change policy and law we will offer periodic reviews. The first issue is coming in June, but you can joint recipients list right now by sending "receive EUupdates" message to office@rac.org.ua (the reviews are available in Ukrainian).

Implementation of the obligations under EU-Ukraine Association Agreement is one of the main drivers of the environmental reforms in Ukraine. This task requires better understanding of the ongoing processes in the EU by public authorities, civil society and other stakeholders. Ukraine can be more effective in implementing the Association Agreement, with better understanding of the need for implementation and public support, if everyone concerned is aware of the EU agenda in environmental protection and climate change areas. Our periodic review aims at raising the awareness and strengthening the dialogue among stakeholders with an objective to support environmental reforms in Ukraine.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION IN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT: A VIEW FROM THE EU-UKRAINE CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

On May 18, 2017, a meeting of the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform took place in Brussels. Environmental agenda had a special role: this time an environment-related report on implementation of the Association Agreement was delivered among other reports traditionally prepared by both sides. Accordingly, key conclusions and recommendations were reflected in the joint declaration, which is adopted on the basis of the reports discussion.

Quite a number of conclusions and recommendations overlapped, despite independently carried out analysis of the implementation of the environmental dimension of the Association Agreement by Ukrainian and EU sides. Experts agree that the Association Agreement is an effective stimulus for reforming environmental policy and law in Ukraine on the basis of modern standards, ensuring sectoral integration and raising effectiveness.

CSF members expressed concern over lack in Ukraine of the necessary legislation for horizontal policy instruments, i.e. environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment. These issues were raised by the EU officials as well, which attended the meeting.

Participants called upon the Government of Ukraine to speed up the process of revision of the Strategy for National Environmental Policy of Ukraine till 2020. The revision process is taking too long, while the strategy is an important instrument for environmental reforms in various sectors and setting key policy priorities. In fact, a provision on comprehensive environmental strategy is addressed in Chapter 6 of the Association Agreement, which lacks attention compared to approximation process.

Institutional capacity of public authorities was also highlighted as one of the challenges for effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the agreement. In particular, participants discussed the need for independent assessment of the draft legal acts for their compliance with relevant EU legislation.

As to thematic issues, the experts noted the progress in the field of water resources management, in particular the adoption of the law introducing integrated water management approaches based on water basin principle.

Current approach by the Ministry of Environment, which means that strategic documents should precede development of any draft laws or regulations, was praised to be effective. Such trends are currently taking place in waste management, marine policy and climate change areas.

The declaration notes the need to pay greater attention to regional context of implementing environmental dimension of the Association Agreements, as well as the need to raise awareness of the direct benefits citizens and local communities gain from the agreement's implementation.