

To: Please see 'CC' listing.

From:

Mark Johnson,  
Xxx  
Xxx xxx  
Xxx xxx  
Kent  
xxx  
United Kingdom.

10<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing as the founder of '*Serbian Animals Voice*' (SAV) <http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/> ; a NGO which is operated from Kent, England Uk, and which was founded by myself in an attempt to help stray animal welfare and which also includes some environmental issues in the Balkans.

I ask please your help and assistance with regard a (Serbian) environmental issue which I have been involved with for several years – namely an area of outstanding natural beauty within Serbia known as 'Stara Planina'



I have attempted to summarise the current, up to date situation regarding the situation at Stara Planina via the following link, which is the latest being posted on my site:

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2012/05/31/serbia-stara-planina-update-june-2012/>

Whilst fully appreciating that Serbia is not currently a member state of the EU; which presents additional difficulties in its own right, I consider that it is attempting to become an EU member state as soon as possible. This very much means that the Enlargement Commission of the EU should be addressing all the information given to it.

During November 2011 I personally wrote to both the EU Commission for the Environment – Commissioner Janez Potocnik, and also to the EU Commission for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy – Commissioner Stefan Fule, as I consider the **illegal destructions** being undertaken at Stara Planina are **both EU environmental and EU enlargement issues of concern which the EU should now be addressing.**

Copies of both the response provided to us by the EU (dated 20/01/12), and also that provided to the EU (Nicholas Hanley) by the Serbian Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning (dated 02/09/11) are attached to this mail.

I very much question the comments made by Assistant Minister Pokimica in his letter to the EU, (copy attached) where it is declared:

*“the Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning pays special attention to this sensitive and very important issue for our country, in particular since it affects both, the status of biodiversity and ecosystems and sustainable economic development of the entire country. Furthermore, the Government of Serbia reconfirmed the tremendous values of protected areas in recently adopted national strategy for Biodiversity Conservation and also in the new law of Nature protection which is harmonized with relevant EU legislation in this field”.*

I think that this is typical Serbian Ministry rubbish – weasel words that are intended to mean so much, where as **the reality is very, very different** – the words mean nothing – it is money which really does the talking !!

From the latest information provided to myself (SAV) from Serbian environmental campaigners, it would appear that **the policy of the current Serbian government is to update and modify ‘Article 35’**, (Serbian legislation which has been used for environmental protection in the past, and which has now been modified twice within the last few years), **specifically for the benefit of constructional investors, and at the personal request of companies which have already made illegal constructions on protected natural areas (such as Stara Planina, Kopaonik, Golija etc...).** Some of these constructions are located in currently forbidden construction areas, breaching the existing laws on the Environment, Planning and Construction. These illegal constructions (involving ski lifts for one; and a hotel for another) are outlined in the SAV article reference given above.

I argue that this illegal destruction of the environment by the Serbian government, specifically bowing to (construction) industry pressure, is hardly reconfirming the alleged Serbian government policy of:

- *“the tremendous values of protected areas”*  
and that Mr. Hanley and the EU can

- *“accept the assurances of my (Nebojsa Pokimica) highest consideration”.*



Since the representative of the Serbian Ministry for the Environment, Mr. Nebojsa Pokimica, assistant to the Minister Dulić, sent a report to the EU Commission, (Mr. Hanley), it was declared that there was **no breach of laws during the construction** of the mega ski centre at Stara Planina. Serbian environmental activists have recently acquired different information to this government attitude **in which it does clearly show that there have been breaches of laws during construction at this facility.** **The Serbian environmentalists now consider that it is time to inform the actual truth of the current situation to the EU Commission and Mr. Hanley.**

I am undertaking this on their behalf by way of this letter / e mail.

As declared, I have attempted to summarise the current situation regarding Stara Planina, including the illegalities, via the following link which is routed to my site:

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2012/05/31/serbia-stara-planina-update-june-2012/>

**I ask please that both Commissioner Janez Potocnik and also Commissioner Stefan Fule who supposedly represent the requests of European citizens, namely myself, actually address this issue in detail with the Serbian government. They need to actually go below the shrouded lies and words which are pumped out by the Serbian ministry, words which the EU Commission appears to currently believe 100%.**





Through the actions and policy of the Serbian Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, **Serbia is quite simply amending environmental legislation at the request of investors and construction organisations, whilst ignoring the real issue (as required in EU membership policy) of specifically caring for the environment, flora and fauna.**

One has to ask who in the Serbian government is being paid what, by investors and construction organisations, to ensure that these legislation changes are approved; legislation changes which so often result in vast environmental devastation in areas of natural beauty. A kind of policy which says; whoever pays the most gets the green light to do the most environmental damage – as approved by continuing changes in government environmental legislation which will be amended and thus assured to comply with what is asked ! – I call it ‘corruption’; what do you call it ?

**It would appear to both me and other environmental campaigners that the Serbian Ministry is bowing to the wishes of big constructional industry pressure prior to EU accession so that it (Serbia) does not then have to go through the process of EU controls and legislation (which may prevent such construction from taking place) once it becomes an EU member state at a future date. I find this approach / attitude unacceptable for a nation wishing to achieve EU status in the near future; hence the need for the EU Enlargement Commission to become more involved right now !.**

I would be very keen to hear what Commissioner Janez Potocnik, Commissioner Stefan Fule, and Mr. Hanley have to say about this current situation in Serbia. It would appear once again that Mr. Hanley is quite happy to be taken for a ride and believe every word that is declared in the letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011 from Nebojsa Pokimica at the Serbian Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning. Mr.

Hanley is supposed to be keeping a tight control on the environmental situation in Serbia, on behalf of the EU Commission. This is something we question.

Why is it that it always appears to be NGO's and environmental groups (usually volunteers such as in this situation) who pick up the realities of what is actually happening ? – when the EU Commission(s) should be the ones picking up and responding to every irregularity, especially where future nation EU membership applies !

There is a clear corruption within Serbia; and it would appear so in the evidence now provided re Article 35 and the construction industry, and whilst the **EU Environmental and Enlargement Commissions would appear to accept everything that is said by the Serbian Ministry, we are not.** This type of corruption (**non compliance with the 'EU rule of law'**) should be stamped out by the EU Commission before nations such as Serbia become an EU member state. Why are you not doing it ?



It is this very corruption in Serbia which is devastating both the environment, flora and fauna of what was once beautiful and protected areas. The destruction caused is clearly shown in my SAV article; along with other previous posts which I have produced on this campaign for Serbian environmental campaigners in the past, as follows:

Past SAV links relating to the Stara Planina campaign:

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2011/12/22/serbia-eu-environment-and-eu-enlargement-commissions-stara-planina-serbia-update-december-2011-do-eu-commissioners-speak-the-truth-or-simply-weasel-words/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2011/11/13/serbia-and-the-eu-does-the-eu-dog-wag-the-environmental-tail-or-the-serbian-government-eu-accession-tail-actually-wag-the-eu-dog/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2011/08/02/eu-serbia-are-they-both-leading-us-up-the-environmental-garden-path/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2011/06/21/serbia-does-it-now-realise-that-law-implementation-is-a-serious-issue/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2010/09/27/serbia-stara-planina-update-the-governments-illegal-environmental-destruction-continues-full-news-and-pictures-in-this-post/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/09/11/serbia-campaign-for-the-protection-of-zvezdara-forest-in-belgrade/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/09/03/golema-reka-draft/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/08/24/240809-global-launch-of-campaign-to-save-stara-planina-animals-and-plants-international-supporters-your-individual-help-is-essential-please-copy-and-send-letter-given-in-post-below/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/08/21/serbia-save-stara-planina/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/08/20/stara-planina-200809-few-days-till-launch-of-next-campaign-phase/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/08/15/serbia-campaign-to-save-flora-and-fauna-at-stara-planina/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/08/09/serbia-more-major-environmental-destruction-planned-your-help-needed-to-raise-global-awareness/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/06/24/serbia-please-give-your-petition-support-to-save-serbian-beautiful-river-rzav-from-government-and-industry-abuse/>

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/2009/01/15/serbia-beautiful-environmental-region-of-serbia-to-become-ski-centre-please-read-and-take-action/>

Within the past week, I have written to several Uk MEPs on this specific issue and asked them to also contact you also on my behalf. I am hoping they will do this in the very near future.

I look forward to your response in order that I can inform supporters of SAV of your actions, and also so that I Can forward EU actions on this issue to the EU Press. What ever happens, they will be informed of the outcome.



This letter will be posted onto my (SAV) site in order that a global audience <http://www4.clustrmaps.com/counter/maps.php?user=9b44b4e0> can be informed of what is requested of you now; that being to represent the request(s) of the EU citizen.

Further progress is now in your hands. I trust you will act accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Mark Johnson – Founder ‘Serbian Animals Voice’; Kent, England.

















