**TRANSBOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF WINDFARM AKMENĖ TWO, UAB, UP TO 6 WIND TURBINES PARK IN AKMENĖ DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, KRUOPIAI ELDERSHIP, C1 ZONE**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC BILATERAL CONSULTATION**

16 August 2022, 17:00-18:03

Remote online meeting via Zoom Meetings

Official languages of the meeting: Lithuanian and Latvian (consecutive translation)

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| **Agenda** |  |
| 17:00-17:03 | Information on technical “Zoom Meetings” procedures |
| 17:03-17:05 | Opening of the consultations |
|  | Lithuania: Senior Advisor of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania on environmental impact assessment issues Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė |
| 17:05-17:35 | Presentation of the project and its Environmental Impact Assessment (further referred as EIA) |
| 17:35-17:55 | Session of questions and answers |
| 17:55-18:03 | Closing of the consultations |
|  | Lithuania: preparer of Environmental Impact Assessment documents of the proposed economic activity Mrs. Rūta Kybartė |
|  | Senior Advisor of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania on environmental impact assessment issues, Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė |
|  | Latvia: Senior Expert of Environmental Impact Assessment Division of the Environmental State Bureau of the Republic of Latvia, Mrs. Ilze Lielvalode |

**Participants**

From the **Lithuanian** side: representatives of the developer – Windfarm Akmenė Two UAB; compiler of Environmental Impact Assessment documents of the proposed economic activity, landscape and biodiversity experts; representatives of the coordinating authority – Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė, Senior Advisor of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, issues of Environmental Impact Assessment, Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania and Mindaugas Raulinaitis, Chief Specialist of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, issues of Environmental Impact Assessment, Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania.

From the **Latvian** side: Senior Expert of Environmental Impact Assessment Division, The Environmental State Bureau of the Republic of Latvia, Mrs. Ilze Lielvalode; representatives of the interested public.

**Proceedings of the meeting**

1. *Information on technical “Zoom meeting” procedures*

The remote online meeting of bilateral consultations (further referred as Meeting) started with a presentation of general technical information on the usage of Zoom Meetings platform by Mrs. Rūta Kybartė the compiler of the Environmental Impact Assessment documents for the planned economic activity (further referred as **Compiler**).

1. *Opening of the consultations*

The meeting was officially opened by Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė, Senior Advisor of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, issues of Environmental Impact Assessment, Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. The Senior Advisor shortly presented major topics of the aim of the meeting and importance of the planned activity.

1. *Presentation of the project and its EIA*

The Compiler of the Environmental Impact Assessment documents of the proposed economic activity presented detailed information about the impact of up to six wind turbines on environmental components (water, climate and ambient air, land and soil, immovable cultural heritage values, landscape, biological diversity, material values, public health) of the Latvia Republic.

1. *Session of questions and answers*

The Q&A session started after the presentation of the planned economic activity. Information on the questions and answers is presented below.

Q. (Ukru KAP representative): Three wind turbines have already been built in the area, whether three additional wind turbines or a total of six new wind turbines will be built near those existing ones? How will the monitoring of birds and bats take place? How compensations will be paid for exceeded limit values, who will evaluate them? Why does the presentation provide information of the impact on water, birds and nature before information about human health, are they least important?

A. (The Compiler): In the EIA report the cumulative impact was assessed taking into account the existing wind turbines and those wind turbines that are planned to be built. In this EIA report it is planned to built up to 6 new wind turbines.

According to the practice of assessing the wind turbines in Lithuania, monitoring of dying birds and bats is going to be carried out for 3 years after the start of operation. The period may be extended if a significant negative impact of wind turbines on birds and/or bats is identified. Mitigation measures are selected by ornithologist or bats’ experts depending on what negative impact is identified.

It is planned to install mitigation measures that regulate the dispersion of shadow flickering and reduces the impact, i.e., each wind turbine will be equipped with a “anti-flickering” system that will measure the shadow flickering in the living environment. If an exceedance of flicker is detected (> 30 hours per year), the wind turbine will automatically stop. By using “anti-flickering” system it is not possible for exceeded shadow dispersion. In addition, based on the simulations exceeded shadow dispersion will not occur in the territory of the Republic of Latvia even without applying “anti-flickering” system. Therefore, there will be no exceeded shadow flickering on the living houses located in the territory of Latvia.

It is worth to mention that the sequence of the environmental components mentioned in the assessment and presentation was chosen, according to the EIA regulations applicable in Lithuania. Each environmental component is described in detail in the EIA report, not listed in order of priority. The evaluation of noise and shadow flickering dispersion is very important and was performed taking into account the cumulative zone C1 impact. As it was shown during the presentation, the limit values of noise and shadow flickering dispersion will not reach the border of the Republic of Latvia. Therefore, it will not reach the nearest residential areas either and there will be no negative impact on the public health of the residents of Latvia.

Q. (Ukru KAP representative): Why are the wind turbines planned to be built so close to the Latvian-Lithuanian border? How many new wind turbines are planned? What is the potential impact of vibration? What happens if there is emergency, such as a lot of snow will break off the blades and how far away they can fly due to inertia? Can the fallen blades injure people and animals in the surrounding or harm the environment? If a negative impact is identified, to whom compensations will be paid? Whether monitoring will be carried out for 3 years (in our view, this period is too short to assess the damage to birds and humans)?

A. (The Compiler): The proposed territory of planned economic activity was selected by taking into account the special plan of the location of wind turbines in the territory of Akmenė district municipality approved by the Akmenė district municipality council decision. According to the national legislation, wind turbines can be built only where the territory is intended for the development of wind turbines.

It is planned to built up to 6 new wind turbines. The cumulative impact of those wind turbines that are already existing in the territory and those that are planned to be built are evaluated in this EIA report.

In particular, if there was any vibration, it would damage the operation of the wind turbines. Therefore, wind turbines are designed in such way that they do not cause vibrations and would be able to operate safe and efficiently. The wind turbines are controlled remotely by a microprocessor and if there is the slightest non-compliance with technical conditions the microprocessor will stop the wind turbine. No negative impact of the vibration on the territory of the Republic of Latvia has been identified.

If there were any emergencies, the impact of it would be local. The planned wind turbines located 0,8-1,5 km away from the territory of the Republic of Latvia, therefore any impact of the emergencies would not reach the territory of the Republic of Latvia.

According to the best practice in Lithuania, monitoring of dying birds and bats is carried out for 3 years after the start of operation. The monitoring period may be extended if significant negative impact of wind turbines to birds and/or bats is identified. Mitigation measures are selected by independent ornithologist and/or bats’ experts.

Noise and shadow flickering dispersion calculations were presented in the EIA report where all the nearest residential environments were evaluated. Wind turbines are planned to be built in such location that their operation will not exceed limit values of noise and shadow flickering dispersion. Therefore, no negative impact to the public heath has been identified.

If there would be any exceedance of noise and shadow flickering dispersions of planned wind turbines, the developer of the activity should apply additional compensatory measures or stop wind turbines. Since the nearest residential environment in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania 600 m away from the planned wind turbines and no negative impact is expected on it, and the nearest border line between Latvia and Lithuania is at 800 m, no negative impact is expected in the territory of the Republic of Latvia either.

Q. (Ukru KAP representative): To whom people should contact if they feel that noise, shadowing, vibration, etc. norms have been exceeded?

A. (The Compiler): In such case, people should contact the environmental authority in Latvia, which should organize the measurements and evaluate the negative impact.

A. (Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė): As it has been presented, there are residents in Lithuania who are located closer to the planned wind turbines than Latvians. If it was determined that the allowed impact was exceeded in Lithuania, assumptions could be made that allowed impact possibly was exceeded as well in Latvia. In this case, we should immediately inform the responsible Latvian authorities, which would implement corresponding measures or inform us about required actions. Such mechanism is foreseen in the ESPO Convention, by which cross-border consultations are carried out, i.e., Article 7 on post-project analysis. During the monitoring process, liable Lithuanian and Latvian institutions would be in contact and would initiate respective decisions if significant impact was determined.

Q. (Ukru KAP representative): How long wind turbines will be operated? What is the expected operating time? And when it expires, how they will be disposed of?

A. (The Compiler): Currently, according to the technical specifications of the wind turbines, the term of operation is 35 years or more. After such term wind turbines shall be dismantled or the term of operation is extended according to experts’ evaluation. If the wind turbines are dismantled, they are disposed of in compliance with all applicable legal acts in Lithuania.

1. *Closing of the consultation.*

Whereas no more questions were raised, the meeting was officially closed by Mrs. Beata Vilimaitė Šilobritienė, the Senior Advisor of Pollution Prevention Policy Group, issues of Environmental Impact Assessment, Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. The Senior Expert of the Environmental Impact Assessment Division of the State Office of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Latvia, Mrs. Ilze Lielvaloda also discussed further procedural steps. It was concluded that the consultation was successful, and that sufficient information was provided. It was mentioned that the interested public in Latvia can submit questions or comments in writing until 28th of August, which the institutions will then process and send to the Lithuanian side. The official letter with the proposals for the Environment impact assessment report will be sent within 30 days after the 28th of August.

The Compiler of Environmental Impact Assessment documents of the proposed economic activity Mrs. Rūta Kybartė expressed the request to Mrs. Ilze Lielvaloda to send these proposals for the Environment impact assessment report within 2 weeks after the 28th of August. Mrs. Ilze Lielvaloda mentioned that she understands the importance of the project and promised that Latvia will try to send the proposals as soon as possible.

1. *Note.*

All arguments expressed during the remote online meeting regarding the impact of the proposed economic activity on the environmental components of the Republic of Latvia are based on the independent experts’ conclusions, which are additionally attached to the Minutes.