

Facing Enterprises - Challenges and Needs of Women Living Near Factories in Rustavi

This document is a study that analyzes the impact of enterprise activities in Rustavi on women's lives. Also, recommendations to the self-government, central government and large enterprises are presented to improve the ecological situation.

The document is prepared by NNLE "Kvemo Kartli Media" within the framework of the project – "Survey of the needs of women living near large enterprises in Rustavi." The project is funded by the Women's Fund in Georgia.

The views and opinions expressed by the authors of the research may not reflect the position of the donor.

NNLE "Kvemo Kartli Media" is responsible for the content of the research.

Author: **Ketevan Murgulia, Manon Bokuchava**

Translator: Natia Davitashvili

Graphic designer: Sofia Beridze-Stavrogin



ქალთა ფონდი საქართველოში
WOMEN'S FUND IN GEORGIA

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
1. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	6
2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH ECO ACTIVISTS (DATA ANALYSIS)	9
3. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN LIVING NEAR RUSTAVI ENTERPRISES (DATA ANALYSIS)	12
4. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ENTERPRISES	17
5. VIOLATIONS DETECTED IN THE OPERATION OF ENTERPRISES BY STATE AGENCIES	20

Introduction

Dozens of large and medium enterprises operate in Rustavi.¹ On the one hand, they are the main employer of the population - they provide citizens with a more or less stable income, and on the other hand they are the main polluters of the environment in the city. Environmental damage, in its turn, affects the social and economic situation of people - there are various types of environmental problems that have negative affect human health.

The air quality is controlled by the National Environment Agency and the number of solid particles in the air of Rustavi has been outlined many times. For example, at the end of last year, on December 23 and 24, the concentration of solid particles in the air of Rustavi reached a record high level - about 305 micrograms - when the maximum allowable limit was 50. A new, obviously negative record of air pollution in Rustavi was observed on March 6 of the current year [2020]. According to the air quality web portal, air pollution in Rustavi has reached 75%. The highest parameter and percentage of the air pollution was distributed among the most dangerous dust particles - PM10 and PM2.5.²

At the moment, the main source of pollution remains the large enterprises in the city. Various studies conducted with the population living in the vicinity show that a number of social problems in the local settlement [frequent diseases, internal migration] and unequal access to resources are often the consequences of the work of enterprises. This affects the environment and the health of the population.³ According to the researches conducted in Kvemo Kartli region⁴ it is also proven that enterprises violate the standards set by the state for them, that harms the environment. For years, the population had not organized protests against the harmful effects of enterprises, but today in Rustavi, civil activists who have created a platform “I can’t breathe” are actively working on this issue.

The sociological research is focused on identifying the problems of women living in the vicinity of enterprises in Rustavi. In addition, the research question is to determine the issue how women overcome the existing social or economic difficulties faced by the polluted environment as a result of the activities of enterprises.

The study reviews the following issues: reflecting the facts of environmental pollution by enterprises and identifying the problems caused by it; also, health issues,

¹ Medium Term Economic Development Strategy Program of Self-governing city Rustavi (2013-2017), available at: <https://bit.ly/3e256Ht>

² Kvemo Kartli TV-Radio Company, March 6, 2020, «New Record of Air Pollution Reaches 75% in Rustavi», Available at: <https://bit.ly/3dTByvj>

³ Kitula, A. G. N. 2006. The environmental and socio-economic impacts of mining on local livelihoods in Tanzania: A case study of Geita District. *Journal of cleaner production* :<https://bit.ly/2x3S8bn>

⁴Felix-Henningsen, P., Urushadze, T. F., Narimanidze, E. I., Wichmann, L., Steffens, D., & Kalandadze, B. B. (2007). Heavy metal pollution of soils and food crops due to mining wastes in the Mashavera River Valley : <https://bit.ly/2JJGi8>

economic activities of the population and social changes that are directly or indirectly related to the activities of enterprises are analyzed. In addition, the focus is made on the social responsibility of enterprises and based on the assessments of respondents; recommendations have been developed for both enterprises and government agencies.

Living in a healthy environment is one of the most important human rights. Accordingly ensuring the protection of this right is a precondition for maintaining the health of the population. One of the key issues of the current study is the assessment of environmental policy and the determination of the state vision for arrangement health issues. A significant challenge for citizens is the lack of information about the damage to human health or the environment as a result of the activities of enterprises. Also, the existing action plans regarding the environmental or social responsibility of enterprises are vague. Neither the websites of public agencies nor companies provide information on how a citizen affected by the activities of enterprises should act to solve a problematic issue; Who to contact in case of damage as a result of the activities of the enterprise.⁵

⁵ „Green Alternative”, Access to Environmental Information in Georgia, available at: <https://cutt.ly/zujFSzr>

1. Methodological Framework

The main purpose of the research is to study the impact of large enterprises in the vicinity of women's lives and health in Rustavi. Accordingly, the aim of the research is, on the one hand, to determine the social impact of enterprises on the population, and on the other hand, to identify the needs of women, which coincides with environmental issues. In addition, one of the objectives of the study is to increase self-responsibility for environmental issues and to promote healthy, open discussion.

Based on the goals and objectives of the research, a qualitative research method was selected. Our organization has conducted in-depth interviews with members of the group of civil activists "We can't breathe". Exactly "We can't breathe" is a platform that systematically monitors the environment and disseminates information about air quality; as well as photo / video documentation of the activities of enterprises. The current interviews with the three active women members of "We can't breathe" were unstructured and the respondents

themselves talked about the main aspects of their work, ideological or environmental views. The existing sociological approach envisages only involvement of interviewer in the interview process when necessary, in order to give direction, thus respondent will have opportunity to speak freely.⁶

An important part of the research along with activists is women living in the vicinity of enterprises. 17 women living near the enterprises were selected as respondents. Field works were conducted early March 2020.

Proximity to large enterprises, on the one hand, and a high rate of environmental pollution, on the other hand, were important in the location determination process for the research. Settlements were identified as the location of the study to make more visible the impact of the enterprises' activities on the population and the environment. In addition, the study covered different areas around the enterprises to provide researchers with a complete picture of the ecological, social and economic situation of the local population.



Source: The Platform of Civic Activists "We can't Breathe", Enterprise "Geosteel"

⁶ Tinatin Zurabishvili, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*, Social Sciences Series (Tbilisi: Center for Social Sciences, 2006)

In-depth interviews were conducted through direct communication with 5 respondents living near large enterprises on D. Gareji and N. Dumbadze streets and the other 12 interviews were recorded online due to the state of emergency declared in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The duration of the in-depth interview was 35-45 minutes.

The purpose and objectives of the project were explained to each respondent from the very beginning. The interviews were analyzed by examining the context of reality and personal experience perceived by the respondents. The following approach was used for data analysis within the study:

- Analysis of information received from respondents;
- Monitoring of the environment in the vicinity of enterprises;
- Requesting public information from various state structures;
- Analysis of photo-video materials taken by civil activists and media outlets.

The introduction of the report describes the methodological framework of the research and identifies the impact of enterprises on the environment and

women's health. In the concluding part of the study the main findings and recommendations are summarized.

Research Findings:

- ◆ **The negative impact of the activities of enterprises on the environment** - Respondents name enterprises located in the city as the main source of air pollution. Part of them says that enterprises work with more workload at night when the emissions are relatively difficult to notice; therefore, they demand to monitor the work of enterprises at night, which, in their opinion, shows more clearly the harmful effects on the environment.

- ◆ **Negative impact of the activities of enterprises on health** - The majority of respondents say that they suffer from industrial dust-emissions, which are the result of the work of enterprises and severely affect their health. They noted that often suffer from eyes burning, dry cough and shortness of breath. They are also afraid of increasing oncologic diseases, which are also linked to the activities of enterprises. The majority of respondents complain of weak immunity and allergic diseases.

- ◆ **Gender vulnerability** – The damage caused by enterprises has a severe impact on women’s lives. It is especially difficult for them to overcome harmful environmental conditions, and the lack of necessary finances hinders them to carry out periodical checking their health condition and control the chemical emissions of the enterprises, how the polluted air, affect their health.

- ◆ **Negative aspects of social impact of enterprises** – As the research revealed, often enterprises are the only field of employment, and the absence of alternatives is a kind of demotivation for the population in terms of engaging in eco-activism. In addition, in many cases, in the employment policy of enterprises there are revealed such serious social problems as: inadequate work space, violation of labor rights of employees, high risk of occupational diseases and constant manipulation of job losses in order to suppress protests by employers.

- ◆ **Responsibilities of state structures and control mechanism** – Respondents request the state to enhance control over enterprises, develop an effective monitoring and enforcement mechanism.

Recommendations of eco activists:

- To make the control of the activities of the enterprises more strict and flexible;
- To adjust the filter system of enterprises;
- To eliminate so-called uncontrolled emissions - the process by which smoke comes out from the walls of industrial buildings instead of pipes / filters;
- To treat the city streets on a daily basis, in a wet manner;
- Parliament to develop an effective mechanism for detection and elimination of violations by enterprises;
- Civic activists to activate cognitive and educational activities for the population in the field of ecology;
- Enterprises to take social responsibility before the population and the city;
- The local government should take more responsibility for the difficult situation in terms of air pollution in the city and take concrete / effective steps to solve the problem.

2. In-depth interview with eco-activists

[Data Analysis]

The project – “Survey of the needs of women living in the vicinity of large enterprises in Rustavi” covered the following issues: **identifying the problems caused due to environmental pollution by enterprises, health issues and, consequently, study the social problems faced by women living in the vicinity of enterprises.**

In the first stage of the project, in-depth interviews were conducted with members of the group of eco-activists “We can’t breathe” based on a qualitative research method. Each of them is involved in civic activism and participates in various actions-performances against air pollution and environmental damage by enterprises in Rustavi.

The duration of the in-depth interview was 40-45 minutes. All three activists were explained the purpose and objectives of the research from the very beginning, and after their consent, the interview was recorded as an audio file and at the final stage the data obtained from the decrypted transcripts were analyzed.

During the interviews, the responsibility of the enterprises for the problem of air pollution in Rustavi was outlined. Eco-activists say that the negative impact of the activities of enterprises on the health of the population, especially women, is noticeable. In this regard, respondents talked about the increase in chronic diseases of the oncological

and respiratory systems. One of the respondents noted:

«The air is so polluted due to the defective equipment and technologies of the enterprises that it already has affected the human immune system. In a polluted environment, the human body does not have the ability to fight against various viruses or diseases. Therefore, whether it is cancer or other types of oncologic problems, it is easier to affect a person living in an unhealthy environment. »

Women living near enterprises were identified as a particularly vulnerable group during the interview. One of the respondents mentioned that she herself lived close to the enterprise and based on her personal experience she highlighted the difficult conditions of women living in her settlement in terms of oncologic diseases.

“Today I hear so often about women diagnosed with breast cancer, lung cancer or various oncologic problems - which I feel as if it has already become common. These women directly connect their deplorable health condition to these enterprises/factories.

“As a positive trend, I can name the photo-video material provided by the population to “We can’t breathe”, which shows the emissions of enterprises/factories, which are increasingly polluting the environment and harming human health.»

“It is very difficult to live near factories because we have to breathe their exhaust fumes, which first of all destroys our lungs and immunity

system, and then causes many diseases as well as pollutes the environment in which we live.”

One of the respondents talked about the daily challenges faced by people living near enterprises. As she pointed out, the harmful activities of the enterprises/factories have invaded in the population lives so much **that today they even avoid to open windows, because they are afraid of air polluted.** Although women themselves are in a difficult situation, it has been revealed that children are still the main concern of the population. Respondents noted that mothers often avoid taking their children out and worry about their illness more than their own. It also highlights the challenges of economic hardship and the damaging practices that women face.

“Many women in Rustavi do not have the luxury to take their children away from the dirty air of city, even in summer, and let them go for a vacation in the mountains or at sea. Because of economic problems, they risk not only their own health but also the health of their children too.”

Another respondent links the economic hardship of the population to **the lack of visits to doctors by women.** Consequently, the absence of a **disease control mechanism** was identified as a significant problem for women. Two main issues were outlined in this regard - on the one hand, the lack of financial resources, even in the presence of a health insurance package, and on the

other hand, the fear that accompanies the expectation of a difficult diagnosis.

“Women do not have the opportunity to visit gynecologists or other doctors, even in cases of urgent need; even if they have insurance, which at least partially covers the costs of treatment, medicines are quite expensive, which they can’t afford to buy. I also think that the psychological condition is quite heavy. “We hear so many cases of cancer from neighbors or relatives, women are already afraid that they themselves will one day be in danger of hearing this diagnosis.»

Against the background of identifying these challenges, eco-activists name the main recommendations, the implementation of which, in their opinion, will significantly reduce the damage caused by enterprises to the environment and people. It is

also important that each respondent understands the economic importance of the activities of enterprises for the population and the city. Therefore, their recommendations are not a request to close or cancel the enterprises, but to regulate the environmental protection equipment - the filtration system. One of the respondents also emphasized the importance of social responsibility by enterprises and the need for active involvement in the development of the city. Respondents also considered that the complex work of government structures and groups of civil activists is important in order to timely improve of environmental regulations and harmonize them with European standards. In the current situation, both long-term and daily environmental activities are an important factor.

3. In-depth interviews with women living near Rustavi enterprises

[Data analysis]

The second, important stage of the research was the preparation of in-depth interviews with women living in the vicinity of Rustavi enterprises. The interviews were conducted in live record with 5 residents of Nodar Dumbadze and Davit Gareji streets living near large enterprises in Rustavi, and 12 interviews were recorded online due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

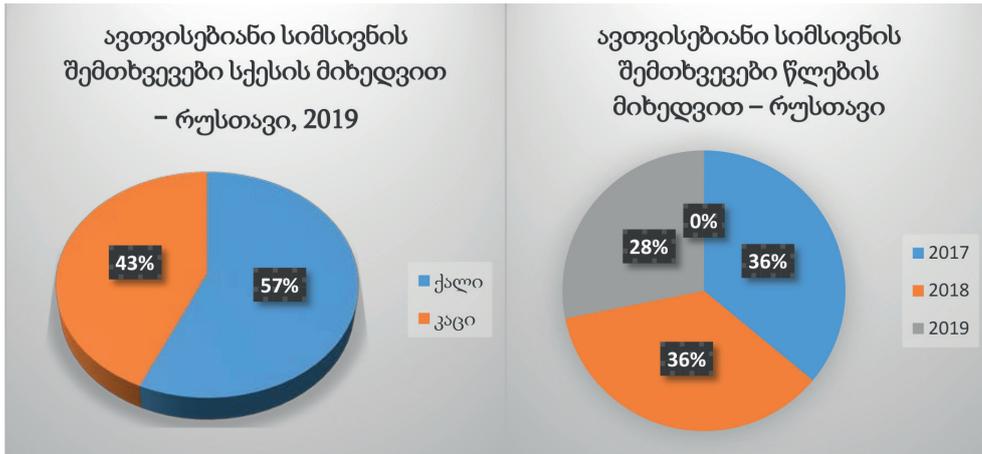
Significant aspects of social impact were identified during the interviews. Accordingly, the impact of the activities of the enterprises on the population and the environment was analyzed. An important component in this regard is, on the one hand is the assessment of impact on the local population as a social structure and, on the other hand, the assessment of threat and risk in terms of environmental impact. The vast majority of respondents also are focused on the importance of political actors in reducing the negative impact of enterprise activities. An important component during the interview process was the focus of the respondents on the harm that, in their opinion, the activities of enterprises cause to human health and well-being.

“I have a lack of air. I can’t breathe freely. I have eyes and throat burning. I never had any chronic diseases, but now I have a strong allergy. After I leave this

city for at least a week, I can breathe, this air kills me.”

“Air pollution causes diseases. It is already difficult to find a healthy person in this city. Everyone is coughing, has allergies, shortness of breath – even children are no longer healthy.”

Within the framework of the research, statistics on oncologic diseases in Kvemo Kartli region were requested from the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health. In 2019, 247 cases of various types of malignant tumors were registered in Rustavi. Out of 247 registered patients, 140 are women and 107 are men. Also important is the fact that the number of malignant tumors has been decreased in 2019 compared to the last two years. In 2017, 307 cases and in 2018, 305 cases were registered in Rustavi. In total, out of 849 diagnoses of malignant tumors in Kvemo Kartli region in 2019, the highest number of cases was observed in Rustavi. The most common diagnosis among women was malignant tumor of the breast [40 cases], and among men - malignant tumor of the bronchi and lung [14 cases]. It is not recorded in the statistics provided by the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health the data of 2020. As explained in the agency, databases are being filled / corrected.



The cases of malignant tumors according to gender in Rustavi

The cases of malignant tumors according to years in Rustavi

The majority of respondents highlighted the status of motherhood, which highlighted fears related to the safety of children. They are worried about the uncertain future of their children and the health problems that, in their opinion, are caused by the activities of enterprises.

“We are told that all these enterprises belong to great people and nothing makes sense. And we are drowning in this dust. Children no longer have immunity, they often catch colds. I, personally, have no hope. Maybe they will care of us.”

“I am a mother and I am especially worried about my two children. They grow in the smoke. As a result of the polluted air from the enterprises, my child already has breathing problems. I’m worried about the future of children in this smoky city.”

Respondents also focused on the responsibility of state structures and political actors - to develop and enforce

a mechanism to control the activities of enterprises based on changes. In this regard, it is important that the state is the only guarantor of positive change, noting that the mechanism of control over the activities of enterprises by political structures is ineffective so far. Consequently, a significant problem was outlined, which is manifested in the improper communication of government officials with the population in terms of involvement in the decision-making process. The research revealed that the population has very poor information about the activities of enterprises. Information about enterprise owners, shareholders or manufactured products is often not available to the local population. Exactly lack of information was cited by the respondents as one of the main reasons for distrust regarding the activities of enterprises.

“Enterprises are one of closed spaces in Rustavi. The population is poisoned

by their emissions and we do not even know what they produce. Unfortunately, the government remembers about us only before. At other times, they always made decisions about new enterprise bypassing the population.”

“People suspect that there are quite influential people among the enterprises owners, but these are just suspicions and we have no information about the people behind the “killer enterprises”.

The respondents identified the lack of social responsibility by the part of enterprises as a significant problem. During the interviews, complete distrust of the enterprise management team was revealed. Respondents, to some extent, focus on individual aspects of taking responsibility by business owners and criticizing their policies towards the city or population.

“This is, at least, a civil irresponsibility of the owners of enterprises toward Rustavi and its population. If the governmental circles can’t exercise proper control, is it possible the managers of the enterprise to take any kind of measures to reduce the damage they do to the environment. Unfortunately, I do not remember a single case when any of them was interested in the problems of the population.”

“Those who are on the leading positions there have tens of thousands of salaries. Workers are actually paid pennies and treated in such a way that they are completely deprived their health.

They gain maximum profit as much as possible and against this background they do nothing for use, people. Neither the filters can be seen anywhere, nor their planted trees. “They could not even think to plant trees in front of their smelly pipes and restraining the smoke of their enterprise.”

Some of the interviews were conducted against the background of the COVID 19 pandemic, which further highlighted the severity of the problems posed by the activities of enterprises in Rustavi. For most of the respondents, enterprises turn out more dangerous enemy than coronavirus. According to their assessment it was the pandemic that identified them as the main actor in terms of air pollution in Rustavi. Two respondents compared the level of air pollution in Tbilisi and Rustavi and pointed out that during the pandemic there was no positive change in air pollution in Rustavi, unlike the capital.

“Transport is almost don’t work now, because of the pandemic, go and see, what is the air quality ?! Nothing has changed at all. This is because the main polluters in our country are enterprises. If cars are a source of air pollution in Tbilisi, these are enterprises that poison everything in Rustavi.”

“My relatives in Tbilisi say that against the background of the pandemic, air quality has been improved dramatically since traffic was restricted. In Rustavi, there has been no change in this regard.

The enterprises are still operating unfiltered here and their emissions pollute the air. It has been outlined well against the background of the traffic stop. «

Respondents identified occupational diseases as a negative aspect of enterprises activities. It should be noted that there is no effective monitoring in Georgia in this regard and, consequently, there is no effective practice to identify occupational diseases. Two respondents noted that family members employed in Rustavi enterprises could not leave their jobs despite their poor health, as their economic condition was quite difficult. Also, one of the respondents highlighted the ineffective policy of the state in terms of occupational diseases, in terms of identifying diseases and assigning the appropriate pension.

“My uncle, who has been working in the company for many years, continues to work with a diagnosis of a very serious illness. No one has asked about his condition. He has no other choice. The state is not helping him at all and he is forced to work.”

“My family member, who is the sole breadwinner of the family, continues to work in the enterprise with the sever diagnosis. Neither his supervisors asked anything, nor was the Ministry of Health in his health condition.”

The study of gender component was identified as an important factor in the research process. The activities

of enterprises severely affected on all strata of society, although women as a vulnerable group suffer the most. Dual vulnerability is classified as a severe social problem over time. Respondents noted that economic hardship and lack of time due to family affairs causes their demotivation in terms of engaging in eco-activism. It is also important that women, due to lack of necessary finances, have less access to health services and often fail to have periodic health monitoring.

“I have so much to do in the family, sometimes I do not even have time to think about my own health problem. Theoretically I realize that my breathing problems are a result of the enterprise exhaust, although I do not have the finances to visit doctor. My health is deteriorating from year to year, but I can't take care of myself.”

“First of all, I am a mother and I worry more about my children than about myself. I have a severe oncologic problem and I managed to see a doctor only a few times due to lack of financial resources. “I have analyzed that the damage that enterprises cause to environment has a serious impact on my health, although I do not even have time for activism.”

Respondents discussed the positive and negative aspects of enterprise activities over their city. Employment opportunities were cited as a useful factor, while the damage to the health

of the population and environmental pollution were named as negative one. Three respondents noted that due to the difficult economic background, the population is forced to blind eye on the harmful practices of enterprises, as it is the only source of income.

Also, the research process revealed that the lack of awareness of the population about important details of the activities of enterprises leads to their less involvement in civic activism, and financial income is often the only motivator, because of which they use to the damage to the environment or health.

All this makes the population of Rustavi very vulnerable in terms of

eliminating public or social problems. Respondents also noted that enterprise is the only employment opportunity for a large part of the population, and the lack of alternatives makes people even more dependent on factory owners.

“Factories take advantage of the fact that people do not have jobs and keep everyone silent because of the two pennies they pay.”

“When only source of income of your family is a small wage earned in an enterprise, it is difficult to fight for a healthy living environment. Nobody wants to starve to death, which is why we suffer the harmful effects of enterprises on the city. «

4. Social responsibility of enterprises

Social responsibility is a voluntary choice of a business, taking into account the interests of different groups of society and having a positive impact on its work, social and natural environment. This means that companies must be responsible for their customers, employees, the general public and the environment in which they operate. Otherwise, it is a gross violation of human rights and the company's activities are considered as gross exploitation of the environment and people.⁷

The social responsibility of companies in Rustavi, such as "HeidelbergCement Georgia", "Geosteel" and "Rustavi Nitrogen", is mainly limited to funding various charitable and socio-cultural events. The company "HeidelbergCement Georgia" funds the education sector and the reconstruction of schools. And the official website of the company "Rustavi Nitrogen" states that, due to the specifics of their activities, the priority is to take care of the health and safety of employees. In addition, the company periodically organizes various types of sports and cultural events, and the company "Rustavi Nitrogen" was named as one of the highest socially responsible organizations in the

fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia.

In March 2019, the target of a group of eco-activists, "We can't breathe" became the company "Geosteel" due to the high pollution of the environment. On Gareji Street, near the enterprise, civil activists put up banners with the words: **"Geosteel avoids social responsibility", "Our health is their income"**⁸

The members of the eco-activists group "We can't breathe" in constant mode point out the damage that, in their estimation, the activities of enterprises cause to the environment and urge the owners of enterprises to work in accordance with international environmental standards - not to harm human health and care for the environment where they work. According to Rustavi Mayor Irakli Tabagua, **"Regulatory legislation should be severed even to the point that the relevant agency to receive technical reports on the environmental impact of enterprises more frequently than once a year."**⁹ Due to the fact that enterprises often deny the accusations of eco-activists against them, within the framework of this research, photo materials were prepared in order to show the facts of "caring" for the working

⁷ Vanclay, F. 2015 Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects. International Association for Impact Assessment http://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SIA_Guidance_Document_IAIA.pdf

⁸ „Radio Liberty” "Geosteel" needs a new enterprise, and Rustavi City Council ecological security" March 25, 2019 - Available: <https://cutt.ly/7upfkog>

⁹ „Radio Liberty” "Trial period for Geosteel", May 16, 2019 - Available: <https://cutt.ly/XuphLrm>

environment of enterprises operating in Rustavi. It has been revealed that in many cases the issue of environmental landscaping is left beyond the attention

of the enterprises and the situation is very difficult in terms of road paving and waste disposal.



Enterprise “Geosteel” - unarranged road surface near the administrative building.



Enterprise “Geosteel” - on the territory it is obvious a disordered environment and the need for planting



“HeidelbergCement Georgia” - the need for environmental regulation and landscaping has been identified here as well

Citizens and activists of the public movement “We can’t breathe” held a protest rally in front of the “Geosteel” factory in Rustavi. According to the protesters, “Geosteel” works without filters and pollutes the city with harmful emissions. **“Install filters – we can’t breathe!”** – with this slogans the protesters called on the management of the enterprise, to install filters and stop

polluting the environment with harmful emissions. One of the protesters Nikoloz Museridze stated regarding this rally:

“We live here and we are not going anywhere! We gather again today to remind the director of “Geosteel” his promise to install the filter in a month. Our request applies not only to the “Geosteel” but also to other factories in the city that work without filters and poison us.”



¹⁰ Interpressnews – “The movement held a rally near the Rustavi Geosteel Factory”, July 7, 2019- Available: <https://cutt.ly/SupJoIq>

The research shows that currently the damage caused to the environment and the population by enterprises is multifaceted, while the issue of social responsibility of enterprises in most cases does not include the creation of decent working conditions in practice and satisfying minimum standards in terms of health insurance of employee. Respondents within the research named the increase in occupational

diseases as one of the most important challenges.

The gross violation of international standards is also observed in terms of public awareness about the activities of enterprises. There is no effective dialogue between the government and the local population, in term of environmental issues and damage reduction caused by enterprises. Accordingly the population has no expectations that the situation will improve in the future.

5. Violations found in the operation of enterprises by state agencies

In the second half of 2019, the Department of Environmental Supervision conducted a complex inspection of large enterprises located in Rustavi. In the framework of the research, we requested official information from the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture. During the monitoring of the enterprises, the Agency found violations of the norms established by the legislation of the field of environmental protection in the following enterprises:

- **“Geosteel”** - the court, by decision of September 20, 2019, recognized the enterprise as an administrative offender and imposed a fine in the amount of 5000 GEL.
- **“Russellois” Ltd** - the court, by decision of December 9, 2019, recognized the enterprise as an administrative offender, according to the first part of Article 798 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia, as well as the second part of Article 45 of the Waste Management Code and imposed an administrative fine in amount 5 000 GEL .
- **“Rustavi Nitrogen”** - the court, by decision of December 18, 2019, recognized the enterprise as an administrative offender in the action provided for in Article 792 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia and imposed an administrative penalty - a fine in amount 5,000 GEL.
- **“Rustavi Steel”** - According to the decision of the Rustavi City Court of April 6, 2020, the administrative violation proceeding against “Rustavi Steel” Ltd was terminated. The mentioned decision is appealed.

- The inspection also revealed the fact of illegal use of minerals [underground fresh water] without proper license. As the fact contained signs of a criminal offense, the material was forwarded to the Kvemo Kartli District Prosecutor's Office for further response.
- **“White Hat” Ltd** - The court, by decision of March 9, 2020, recognized the enterprise as an administrative offender under Article 797 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia, for the violations provided for in Article 43, Part 2 and Article 45, Part 2 of the Waste Management Code of Georgia. The company was fined with 7,500GEL. As of today, the decree is entered into force.

According to the information provided by the Department of Strategic Communications of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, in the research provided by the head of the primary structural unit the future plans of the Ministry and states are highlighted that at this stage the Bill has been submitted [Amending the Law on Atmospheric Air - the Bill on “Changes to the Law of Georgia”, on “Changes to the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia”; The Bill on “Changes to the Law On Environment” to sever sanctions related to harmful anthropogenic effects in the ambient air. Also, to impose additional requirements on regulatory facilities, which due to their activities have a significant impact on ambient air quality.

As for the specific measures, in order to improve the causes and condition of the air pollution in Rustavi, by the Order No. 2-134 of February 14, 2020, of the Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Atmospheric Air Quality Improvement Working Group was established and the Charter of the Atmospheric Air Quality Improvement Working Group was approved.