Legal Study

ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN INTERNET AGE

Publication of environmental information on the Internet











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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to produce a suitable (convenient) general model (pattern) for legislation and administrative practice relating to the publication of information on the environment (environmental information) on the Internet (online) which would secure the public quick and easy access to all the important environmental information in a particular state. We are particularly focused on the information concerning decision-making procedures conducted by administrative (public) authorities (administrative procedures) in which the public may take part and we intend to deal with this topic with the intention of promoting the engagement of the public in such decision-making procedures.

II. SUBJECT MATTER AND METHOD

This study is based on the legislation and administrative practice relating to providing environmental information in the Czech Republic (CR), which represents what is more or less a fairly good (satisfactory) standard among the democratic states respecting the rule of law in continental Europe, as well as the European Union. This study does not aim to give a comprehensive legal examination of the relevant Czech legislation and administrative practice concerning the publication of environmental information on the Internet (online). The aim of this study is just to give a practical analysis of the most important Czech legal and administrative principles and rules in this fileld and provide a synthesis of these into the form of a suitable general model which could be used as a pattern in a particular European state.

Environmental information means especially information on:

- a) the state and development of the environment,
- b) the state of the elements of the environment and the emissions into the environment that affect, or are likely to affect, the elements of the environment,
- c) constructions, activities, and measures which are being prepared or carried out and affect, or are likely to affect, the state of the environment or its elements,
- d) the impacts of constructions, activities, technologies, and products on the environment and human health and an environmental impact assessment,
- e) the administrative procedures concerning the environment or an environmental impact assessment,
- f) the state of human health and conditions for human life as they are, or may be, affected by the state of the environment, emissions, or constructions, activities, and/or measures referred to in (d).

III. ANALYSIS

A general suitable *model* for legislation and administrative practice relating to the publication of environmental information on the Internet (online) should be based on the following fundamental (basic) "pillars", i.e. legal or administrative principles:

- i) an Access to Information Act, i.e. a general act (law) on free public access to information or (as well as) a special act (law) on the right of the public to environmental information;
- ii) legislation relating to the official notice board of each administrative (public) authority, including the range of environmental information which shall be published by the administrative (public) authorities on their own official notice boards;
- iii) legislation relating to the public lists or registers and other information systems (electronic databases) which are maintained (operated) by the administrative (public) authorities on the Internet (online) and by means of which the administrative (public) authorities publish specified categories of information, including environmental information;

iv) a general duty laid down by the law for the competent administrative (public) authorities to publish "ad hoc" specified categories of environmental information on their websites, usually outside the official notice board, as well as outside the publicly accessible information systems (electronic databases).

1. Access to Information Acts

The general and necessary basis (framework) for providing the public with environmental information in every state shall be an Access to Information Act, i.e. an act which guarantees for the public (i.e. everyone) the right of access to environmental information and to timely and complete environmental information.

In this respect there are two possible (alternative) legislative models for a state (a government) to choose, either a model represented by one (a single) universal (general) free Access to Information Act, i.e. an act which regulates the terms and conditions as well as the arrangements for providing all information in general, i.e. including environmental information, or a model represented by two Access to Information Acts, i.e. a first (general) free Access to Information

Act² and a second (special) act on the right of access to environmental information.³ The advantage of the first type of model is its simpler and more useful application in practice. The advantage of the second type of model is that a special act may set the terms and conditions, as well as the arrangements for providing environmental information, in a more specific and suitable way. Anyway, each of the two models can function in real administrative practice more or less with the same effect.

An Access to Information Act, whether represented by the first or the second model, should be based on *the* following basic priciples and rules.

First, the principle of free access to information, i.e. the principle of openness (in contrast to a principle of secrecy or confidentiality). This means that an act (a law) should guarantee for the public a legally enforceable right to obtain (receive) all (i.e. any) environmental information held by the public administration except those categories of information which are explicitly (in an exhaustive way) enumerated by the law and which are excluded from the right

Second, the legal arrangement for providing information shall be based on the principle that the administrative (public) public authorities shall provide information in two possible (alternative) manners: in the first place (primarily) by publication, i.e. on their own initiative towards the general public, or in the second place (secondarily) at the request of a particular person (applicant).

Third, administrative (public) authorities should *publish* information especially (primarily) online, i.e. on their own website or on a website maintained (operated) by a particular operator on their behalf. The duty of an administrative (public) authority to publish information on the Internet shall apply as a general rule in all cases where this way of doing so is possible from the technical point of view. Where it is not technically possible to publish information (or information as a whole) on the Internet, the administrative (public) authority shall at least publish on the Internet clear

to access on particular reasonable and legitimate grounds prescribed by law. Moreover, the right to obtain (receive) information shall be guaranteed for any interested person or else for any applicant, i.e. any natural or legal person requesting information, without his/her having to state a reason for his/her application.

² Act No. 106/1999 Coll. (i.e. Collection of Laws of the Czech Republic) on Free Access to Information.

³ Act No. 123/1988 Coll., on the Right to Environmental Information.

and comprehensible accompanying information about where and when the relevant published information in question (e.g. published in the press) is available, e.g. in a public library.

Fourth, in principle each public authority holding environmental information and having a legal duty to publish some pieces of it shall set up and maintain (operate) its own *website*. Where an administrative (public) authority appears to be unable to ensure the operation of its own website, according to the relevant legislation it should be possible for such an authority to conclude a contract with a specified person (or other authority) that shall set up and maintain (operate) the website on its behalf.

Fifth, the relevant legislation should specify the minimum necessary types (categories) of environmental information which shall be published by competent administrative (public) authorities on their websites. It should also choose one of three possible forms of such online publication, which are the following: (i) on the official notice board, (ii) in public lists and registers or other information systems (electronic databases) maintained (operated) online, or (iii) on their website outside the official notice board and also usually outside the regular public information systems (electronic databases).

Sixth, beyond their legal duties to publish specified categories of information, the administrative (public) authorities may (may be allowed to) publish other categories (types) of environmental information which may be useful for the public. They may do so in two posssible forms: either in the form of information systems (electronic databases) maintained (operated) online (this is suitable for large sets of information which are processed systematically), or in the form of "ad hoc" publication of necessary information which can not be easily classified and placed in an appropriate section within an established information system, i.e. an "ad hoc" publication on the website of an administrative (public) authority in sections such as "News", "Documents", etc.

2. Official notice board

There should be a general rule laid down by the relevant legislation that *each* administrative (public) authority shall be *bound to establish its own official notice board*, i.e. an official technical instrument by which the administrative (public) authority, within its competence (responsibilities), and in cases and in a manner specified by the law, shall publish specified categories of official documents or information, including documents or information concerning

the environment. The official notice board is intended to be used as an instrument for the notification (dissemination) of information with legal significance, especially as a means for the delivery of documents in administrative procedures. The following basic rules relating to official notice boards should be laid down by the relevant legislation.

First, there shall be *two forms* of the one (each) official notice board and these two forms shall have the same content and shall be maintained (operated) simultaneously at the same time. The first form is the material board which shall usually be placed on the building of the public authority (*material notice board*). It is intended for paper documents to be posted. The second form is a special section named "official notice board" on the website of the administrative (public) authority (*electronic notice board*). It is intended for publication of the same documents (i.e. of the same contents) but in electronic form.⁵

Second, the official notice board, both in the material and the eletronic form, shall be *permanently* (i.e. for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week) *accessible to the public*.

Third, the documents shall be posted (published) on the official notice board for a minimum period of 15 days.

Fourth, every document posted on the material notice board shall be *simultaneously also published on the electronic notice board* and the minimum period stipulated by the law for the posting (publication) of the document shall apply for both the material and electronic notice boards in the same way. This means that every document that is posted (published) shall be accessible in both forms of the official notice board for the whole period stipulated by the law, where the beginning and the end of the posting (publication) of the document should usually happen at the same time (day).

4 Cf. Act No. 500/2004 Coll., Code of Administrative Procedure, particularly Sections 25 and 26.

Fifth, the document shall be posted (published) on the official notice board of the administrative (public) authority which is primarily charged by the law to post (publish) it. However, a document concerning the administrative districts of several municipalities shall also be posted (published) for a minimum period

⁵ For example: (1) the official notice board of the Town Authority of Dobříš (i.e. the authority of the Town of Dobříš) in the Central Bohemia Region [online: http://www.mestodobris.cz/uredni-deska/2/p1=57775, 1. 9. 2019], (2) the official notice board of the Prague City Hall, i.e. the main authority of the City of Prague [online: http://www.praha.eu/jnp/cz/o_meste/magistrat/deska/index.html, 1. 9. 2019].

of 15 days on the official notice boards of all the municipalities (municipal authorities) concerned. Thus, every citizen (person) knows that if he/she monitors the official notice board of "his/her" municipality, i.e. the municipality where his/her residence, stay, place of business, registered office (seat), or real estate is situated, he/she can search and find all the published documents or information concerning the administrative district of "his/her" municipality.

Sixth, after the lapse of the minimum period of 15 days the administrative (public) authority shall remove the paper document from the material notice board and shift the electronic document from the (regular) electronic notice board to a special electronic subsection called the "Archives of the official notice board" (also on the website of the administrative/public autohority). In this subsection the electronic document is further available to the public for more or less an indefinite period of time in the future.

Thus, the official notice board is the basic means by which the public administration, or more specifically the competent public authority, within its competences (responsibilities), notifies the public of information of legal significance to the public. It is also the basic means by which they notify such information online (i.e. through the electronic notice

board) and also through the official notice board of the municipality (municipal authority) concerned in which the citizen's (or person's) residence, stay, place of business, registered office (seat), or real estate is situated.

It should be stipulated by the relevant legislation that the competent administrative (public) authorities, within their responsibilities, shall publish on their official notice boards at least the following environmental information:

a) documents relating to every administrative procedure concerning the environment and affecting a large number of participants (persons concerned).⁶ This includes particularly planning (zoning) and/or building procedures with respect to the location or construction of buildings (structures) or other major projects in the locality⁷ and administrative procedures to delimit an area for the mining of a mineral deposit.⁹ The documents to be published in these

⁶ Cf. Section 144 of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

⁷ Cf. Section 84 et seq. and Section 109 et seq. of Act No. 183/2006 Coll., on Town and Country Planning and Building Rules (the Building Act).

⁸ Cf. Section 28 et seq. of Act No. 44/1988 Coll., on the Protection and Use of Mineral Resources (the Mining Act).

⁹ Cf. Section 9 et seq. of Act No. 61/1988 Coll., on Mining Activities, Explosives, and the State Mining Administration.

cases should particularly include notifications of the commencement of the relevant procedure and the final decision (permission). What is meant by "a large number" of participants should be specified in the relevant legislation. However, according to the Czech legislation we can recommend that it should mean around 30 participants;

- b) documents relating to the procedures on general measures, 10 especially on spatial (zoning) plans and other categories of spatial planning documentation. 11 The documents to be published in these cases should particularly include notifications of the commencement of the relevant procedure and an invitation to the public hearing of the draft measure (draft plan) and also the final (approved) general measure or at least information or a reference to the website (or link) where the complete final general measure is available to be searched on the Internet or the address of the administrative (public) authority where the public can inspect it;
- c) documents and information relating to the procedures on the assessment of the effects of public and private projects on the environment (EIA) and

the procedures on the assessment of the effects of plans and programmes on the environment (SEA).12 With regard to the EIA procedure, the documents or information to be published should include the following: notification of the project, the factfinding conclusion (i.e. the conclusion made by the competent administrative authority as a result of a preliminary procedure to determine whether a particular project which falls into category No. II shall be further assessed with regard to its effects on the environment, or not, an environmental impact assessment report produced by an authorised person, information on the public hearing of the project, a record of the public hearing, an external expert's opinion obout the environmental impact assessment report, and the final environmental impact assessment statement (or decision) made by the competent administrative authority. With regard to the SEA procedure, the documents or information to be published shoud include the following: notification of the draft plan or programme, including the draft plan or programme itself and the report on the assessment of its effects on the environment and human health, and the final statement of the competent administrative authority.

 $^{\,}$ 10 $\,$ Cf. Sections 172 and 173 of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

¹¹ Cf. Sections 36–75 of the Building Code.

¹² Cf. Section 16 of Act No. 100/2001 Coll., on Environmental Impact Assessment.

3. Public lists and registers and other information systems (electronic databases) maintained (operated) by the public administration online

The legislation of every state provides for lists and registers to be set up, kept, and maintained (operated) by administrative (public) authorities within the scope of their competences (responsibilities) and - nowadays usually - in the form of information systems (electronic databases), i.e. in the form of large sets of information (data) that are processed by means of computers. The specific feature of lists and registers in comparison with the other information systems of the public administration lies in their main legal purpose: they are intended to be used by administrative (public) authorities for keeping records of the facts with legal significance, i.e. those facts that have consequences for the rights or obligations of natural or legal persons (legal consequences); of course, it may also include information on the environment or its elements, e.g. information on the nature of land use or the mode of land protection or information on the operators of waste disposal facilities (installations). Moreover, it is suitable for some lists and registers, or for some specified categories of information entered into the lists or registers, to be designated by the law

as generally accessible to the public, i.e. to a group of users that is not restricted in any way and so to everyone. And from this point of view the publication of the whole list or register, or of a relevant section of it that is meant to be made available to the public, on the Internet (online) is, of course, the most practicable way of making the relevant information accessible to the public. However, the range of information in the list or register which shall be published on the Internet may - especially with respect to the protection of the personal data of the persons concerned - be restricted in relation to the range of information that is generally accessible to the public; as regards the specified range of information that is generally accessible to the public, the relevant legislation may require a special (different) form of access, e.g. by individual request, e.g. on a request to inspect or copy private contracts, decisions, or permissions kept by an administrative (public) authority in a repository as a part of a list or register.

Moreover, the relevant environmental legislation may provide that administrative (public) authorities, within the scope of their competencies and responsibilities (and often according to the particular elements of the environment), shall set up and maintain various information systems thas contain specified categories of environmental information. These systems are

usually designated as generally accessible to the public and for that reason operated online, usually on the websites of the competent administrative (public) authority. These "ordinary" information systems differ from the above-mentioned category of publicly accessible lists and registers in one important respect: according to the relevant laws they are meant to collect more or less information of factual (real) importance, i.e. without special legal significance, such as information on the state of the elements of the environment or levels of environmental pollution.

However, for practical reasons the relevant laws often mix those two aspects and charge administrative (public) authorities with the task of keeping records of both legal and factual information concerning a particular environmental issue or area within the one information system. Furthermore, the administrative (public) authorities performing their responsibilities within the fields of the environmental law, especially the competent ministries, i.e. the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, often set up and administer large information systems (electronic databases) which are for the most part publicly accessible online. These large information systems are meant to collect, process, and publish both (i) legally important information recorded originally in the official lists and registers and

(ii) information of factual importance concerning especially the state of the environment or its components. These information systems often take the form of comprehensive (all-embracing) Internet portals that are available to the public to search in one place for all the necessary information concerning a particular field or component of the environment, e.g. the air and atmosphere, water, soil, natural sites, or wastes.

We should mention the following important lists and registers and other ("ordinary") information systems (electronic databases) maintained by the Czech public administration which are – at least partially – accessible online to the public and also include some categories of environmental informaton:

A) Cadastre of Real Estate,¹³ i.e. a public register of plots of land and other real estate (immoveables) which contains their list, description, a cadastral map, and records of the rights relating to real estate. The Cadastre of Real Estates is maintained by Cadastral Offices, which have their seats in the regions. As regards information relating to the environment, the following information on real estate

¹³ Cf. Act No. 256/2013 Coll., on the Cadastre of Real Estates (the Cadastral Act).

is entered into the Cadastre: the nature and mode of land use [i.e. whether it is a built-up area, water surface, forest plot, or agricultural plot, such as a field, grassland (meadow or grazing land) or garden, etc.], the mode of legal protection [namely in the form of the agricultural land fund, forest land resources, a specially protected nature area, such as a national park, protected landscape area, nature reserve, or natural monument, or the protective (buffer) zone of a water source]. Online access to selected sections of the Cadastre is available by means of a web application on the website of the competent central administrative authority called the State Administration of Land Surveying and Cadastre.¹⁴

B) Central Nature Conservancy Register, ¹⁵ i.e. a register of specially protected natural areas (especially national parks, protected landscape areas, nature reserves, and natural monuments), tree monuments and the relevant legal instruments (i.e. legislative acts or decisions establishing protected areas or tree monuments) and the attached maps or plans, conservation programmes for protected areas, etc. The controller of the register is the Ministry of

C) Czech National Geoportal INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community),¹⁹ i.e. a more or less comprehensive system that contains all the relevant information concerning the environment or its elements and relating to a particular locality (or plot of land) or geographical area within the state territory (spatial data).

the Environment. The register is maintained (operated) by the Nature Conservation Agency, which is the specialised administrative authority under the Ministry of the Environment and discharges its responsibilities throughout the whole country. As regards the documents in the register, they are kept (maintained) in their original paper form in a repository called the Collection of Documents and most of them are also published in electronic form in a special section called the Digital Register which is operated on the website of the Agency. There is also a practical search application form available to users. 18

¹⁶ Online: https://drusop.nature.cz/portal/, 1. 9. 2019.

¹⁷ Cf. Section 12 of Regulatiion No. 45/2018 Coll of the Ministry of the Environment.

¹⁸ Online: https://drusop.nature.cz/portal/, 1. 9. 2019.

¹⁹ Cf. Section 1 (1) e) and Sections 11a-11d of Act No. 123/1998 Coll., on the Right to Environmental Information. Cf. also Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) and Regulation (EU) 2019/1010 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

¹⁴ Online: https://nahlizenidokn.cuzk.cz/, 1. 9. 2019.

¹⁵ Cf. Section 42 of Act No. 114/1992 Coll., on Nature and Landscape Protection.

The administrator of the Geoportal is the Ministry of the Environment.²⁰ The Geoportal is maintained by the state institution CENIA (Czech Environmental Information Agency), established and directed by the Ministry of the Environment; the main purpose of the CENIA is to collect, process, and assess environmental information and to make it available to both the professional and general public in the Czech Republic. There are specified categories of information in the Geoportal collected from various administrative (public) authorities and institutions according to their competencies. The Geoportal is arranged in the form of thematic maps²¹ which include environmental information according to the themes specified in the implementing regulations.²² The Geoportal includes the following thematic maps which include selected environmental information:

- hydrography: information on watercourses (such as rivers or streams), water surfaces (such as lakes, ponds, and other reservoirs), and water basins,
- specially protected nature areas and/or sites,
- land cover: information on types of physical or biological cover of the Earth's surface, such as

- artificial surfaces (especially urban areas), agricultural areas, forests, natural and semi-natural areas, wetlands, and water surfaces,
- geology and geomorphology,
- soil,
- land use: information on the current and future planned function or purpuse of the land, e.g. residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural, forestry, or recreational (according to the spatial plans),
- human health and safety: information on the geographical distribution of the dominance of pathologies (e.g. cancers) and information indicating the effects on health linked directly or indirectly to the quality of the environment (e.g. air pollution, chemicals, noise); it also contains what is termed a noise map, i.e. a map showing the distribution of noise within the territory,
- natural risks zones, e.g. floods, landslides and subsidence, forest fires, earthquakes,
- atmospheric conditions (including locations and results of measurements),
- bio-geographical regions,
- habitats and biotopes,
- the geographical distribution of the occurrence of plant and animal species,
- mineral resources, including information on the locations of resources (mineral deposits).

²⁰ Online: https://geoportal.gov.cz/web/guest/home, 1. 9. 2019.

²¹ Online: https://geoportal.gov.cz/web/guest/map, 1. 9. 2019.

²² Cf. Regulation No. 103/2010 Coll. of the Ministry of the Environment.

D) Air Quality Information System.²³

The administrator of the system is the Ministry of the Environment. The system is maintained (operated) by the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute.²⁴ This is a central information system that contains the results of measurements and assessments of the levels of air pollution (imissions) in specific locations and areas. There is also a subsection of the system called the Pollution Sources Information System,²⁵ which is a register of emissions and stationary installations (emission sources), e.g. thermal power stations, factories, or waste incineration plants, including the amounts of emissions discharged into the air.

E) Water Management Information Portal.

The administrators of the portal are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment.²⁶ It contains particularly the following categories of information:

• current information: on river levels and discharges and the status and flow rates in water reservoirs, on the precipitation during 24 hours, on water quality, and on the degree of drought,

• a register maintained under the Water Act,²⁷ which contains particularly the following information: river basins, watercourses (rivers, etc.), structures and installations on watercourses, water reservoirs, permitted drawings from surface and underground waters, permitted discharges of waste waters (i.e. under permissions that have been granted), sources of surface and underground waters which are used, or supposed to be used, as sources of drinking water, and additionally: the quantity and quality of surface and underground waters, protected areas of natural water accumulation, protective (buffer) zones of water sources, and flood areas.

F) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
Information System²⁸ and Strategic Impact
Assessment (SEA) Information System.²⁹ Both
systems are maintained (operated) by the state
institution CENIA³⁰ [the Czech Environmental
Information Agency – see 3.C above]. These are
central information systems that contain information

²³ Cf. Section 7 of Act No 201/2012 Coll., on Air Protection.

²⁴ Online: http://portal.chmi.cz/files/portal/docs/uoco/web_generator/, 1, 9, 2019.

²⁵ Online: http://portal.chmi.cz/files/portal/docs/uoco/web_generator/plants/index_CZ.html, 1. 9. 2019.

²⁶ Online: https://voda.gov.cz/portal/cz/, 1. 9. 2019.

²⁷ Cf. Sections 22 (3) and (4) of Act No. 254/2011 Coll., on Waters and on Amendments to Some Other Acts (the Water Act).

²⁸ Online: https://portal.cenia.cz/eiasea/view/eia100_cr, 1. 9. 2019.

²⁹ Online: https://portal.cenia.cz/eiasea/view/SEA100_koncepce, 1. 9. 2019.

³⁰ Online: www.cenia.cz, 1. 9. 2019.

and documents concerning the public procedures for the assessment of the effect of projects, plans, and programmes on the environment, i.e. EIA procedures (on projects) and SEA procedures (on plans and programmes).

G) Waste Management Information System.³¹

The administrator of the system is the Ministry of the Environment. The system is maintained (operated) by the state organization CENIA [the Czech Environmental Information Agency – see 3.C above] directed by the Ministry of the Environment. It contains particularly:

- a register of installations (facilities) for the disposal, collection, or use of waste, especially waste collection points, dumping (waste) sites, waste incineration plants, etc.,³²
- a register of waste transport operators,³³
- a register of installations (facilities) for the collection and disposal of car wrecks (scrapyards),³⁴
- summary information on the waste production and waste management during the last years.³⁵

4. General (subsidiary) "ad hoc" duties of administrative (public) authorities to publish specified categories of environmental information on the Internet

Finally, if it is useful the relevant legislation may also provide for the competent administrative (public) authorities to publish specified categories of environmental information on their websites, usually outside the regular public information systems and regardless of whether such information has previously been published on an official notice board, as these kinds of information usually do not fit into any regular information system. For example, the Ministry of the Environment shall publish annually a Report on the State of the Environment in the Czech Republic and reports on the state of the environment in the regions of the Czech Republic.³⁶

³¹ Online: https://www.cenia.cz/odpadove-a-obehove-hospodarstvi/isoh/, 1. 9. 2019; https://isoh.mzp.cz/, 1. 9. 2019.

³² Online: https://isoh.mzp.cz/RegistrZarizeni/Main/Mapa, 1. 9. 2019.

³³ Online: https://isoh.mzp.cz/SeznamDopravcu/Main/SeznamDopravcu, 1, 9, 2019.

³⁴ Online: https://autovraky.mzp.cz/autovrak/webklient/ralight, 1. 9. 2019.

³⁵ Online: https://isoh.mzp.cz/visoh, 1. 9. 2019.

³⁶ Cf. Section 12 of Act No. 123/1998 Coll., on the Right to Environmental Information. Online: https://www.mzp.cz/cz/zpravy_o_stavu_zivotniho_prostredi_publikace, 1. 9. 2019.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The legislation relating to the publication of environmental information on the Internet (online) should be based on two legal instruments:

- first, on the official notice board, which, in principle, should be established by every administrative (public) authority and which should also have apart from its material form an electronic form, i.e. a special section on the website of the administrative (public) authority;
- second, on publicly accessible information systems (electronic databases) which are maintained and operated by the competent administrative (public) authorities on their websites (online). Thus, all the necessary environmental information, according to particular branches or field (or elements of the environment), may be collected, clearly arranged, and made available to the public.

Moreover, the fundamental legal basis (framework) for both the publication of the environmental information and the provision of such information in general shall be represented by an Access to Information Act (law). In principle, such an act (law) may take the form of either one (general) act on free access to information or two acts, i.e. a (general) free Access to Information Act and a (special) act on the right of the public to environmental information.

About us

ARNIKA - CITIZENS SUPPORT CENTRE (Czech Republic)

Established in 1996, the non-governmental organization Arnika has many years of experience promoting information openness, supporting public participation in decision making, and enforcing environmental justice. Its experts assist various civil society organizations, municipalities, and individuals in solving cases related to environmental pollution and its prevention throughout the Czech Republic. Arnika also participates in international projects focused on environmental protection and strengthening the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Arnika is a member of the Green Circle – an association of ecological non-governmental organizations of the Czech Republic, the European Environmental Bureau, and the European ECO Forum.

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MORE INFORMATION

www.eko.ba www.english.arnika.org

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Founded in 1999, the Center for Environment is a non-profit non-governmental organization dedicated to environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development through advocacy and civic initiatives. The Center promotes the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, specifically free access to information held by public authorities and greater public participation in environmental decision making. It strives to affect relevant environmental policies, raise public awareness of environmental issues, and achieve constructive dialogue and cooperation with stakeholders. It is active mainly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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MORE INFORMATION

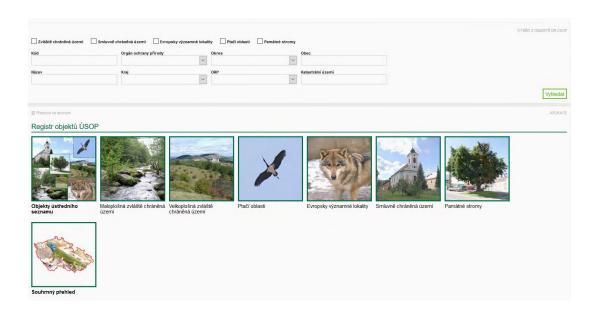
www.czzs.org www.rijekebih.org

A) CADASTRE OF REAL ESTATE

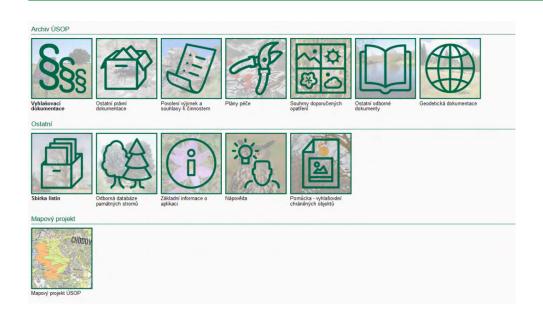


The application allows the users to obtain some selected data concerning the ownership of plots, land, and other real estate (flats or non-residential premises) and rights to them registered in the Cadastre of real estate and information on the state of proceedings for the purpose of the registration of the ownership and other rights of authorized entities to real estate, or for the purpose of

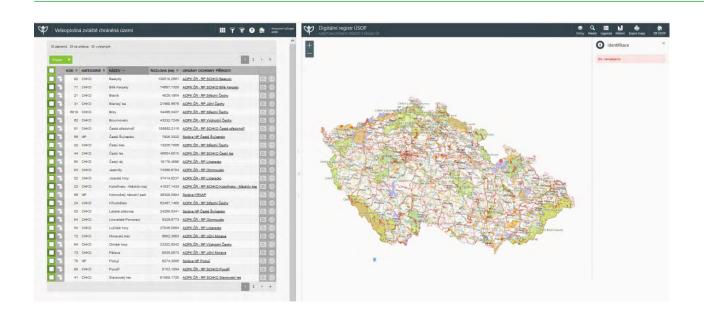
confirming geometric plans. The Cadastre of real estate is freely accessible to all internet users, requires no registration, and is free of charge. Records from the cadastre and some other outputs are not available for free, but it is possible to make purchases of them in the application and pay through a payment portal.



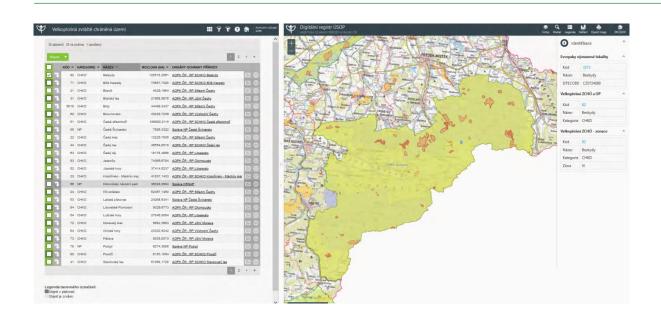
The Central Nature Conservancy Register contains information on small- and large-scale specially protected areas, bird areas, habitats of European interest, contractually protected areas, tree monuments and a summary overview. There is also a practical search application form available to users that can search according to the code of the area, the respective nature conservation authority, the district or municipality, the name, and the region or the cadastral territory.



In the CNCR Archive (from left to right) we can find the announcement documentation, other legal documentation, management exemptions obtained, management plans, summaries of recommended measures, other professional documents, geodetic documentation, collections of documents, and a database of the tree monuments

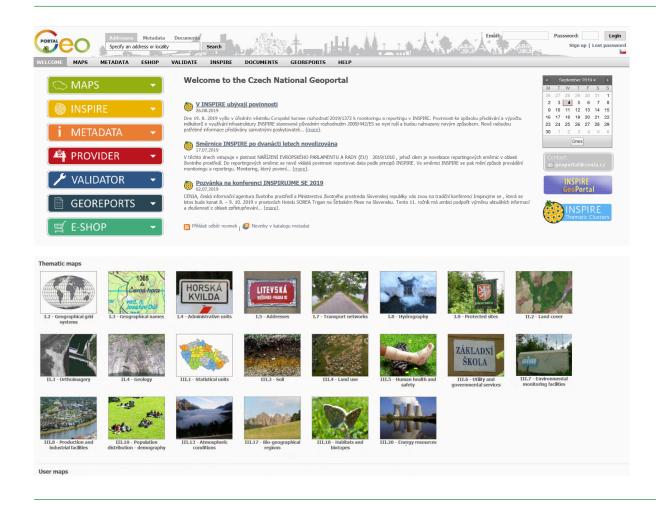


Example of searching: large-scale specially protected areas



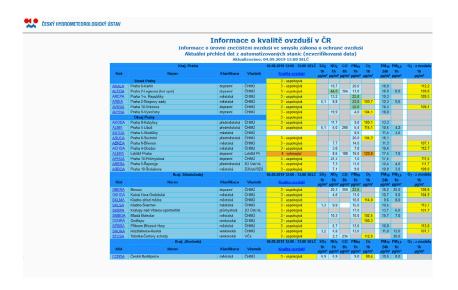
Example of searching: the large-scale specially protected area "Beskydy"

C) CZECH NATIONAL GEOPORTAL INSPIRE



The geoportal includes the following thematic maps (see above)

D) AIR QUALITY INFORMATION SYSTEM



EXAMPLE
The air quality index

Index	Kvalita ovzduší	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	O ₃	PM ₁₀	
		1h μg/m³	1h μg/m³	8h μg/m³	1h μg/m³	1h μg/m³	
1	velmi dobrá	0 - 25	0 - 25	0 - 1000	0 - 33	0 - 20	
2	dobrá	> 25 - 50	> 25 - 50	> 1000 - 2000	> 33 - 65	> 20 - 40	
3	uspokojivá	> 50 - 120	> 50 - 100	> 2000 - 4000	> 65 - 120	> 40 - 70	
4	vyhovující	> 120 - 350	> 100 - 200	> 4000 - 10000	> 120 - 180	> 70 - 90	
5	špatná	> 350 - 500	> 200 - 400	> 10000 - 30000	> 180 - 240	> 90 - 180	
6	velmi špatná	> 500	> 400	> 30000	> 240	> 180	
	Veličina se na uvedené stanici neměří						
	Neúplná data						

LEGE	ND)
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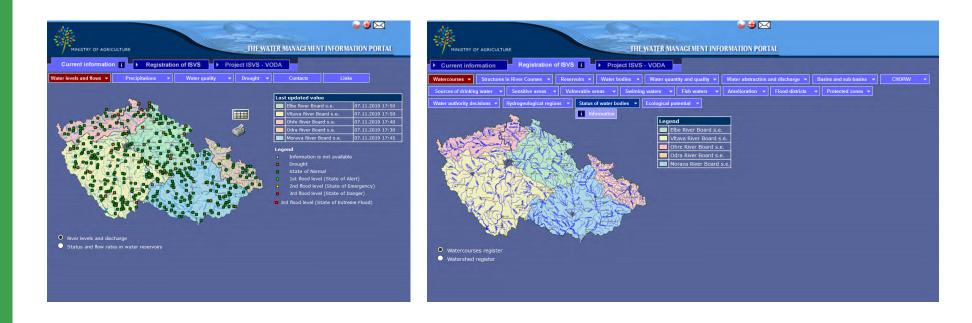
- 1 very good
- 2 good
- 3 satisfactory
- 4 acceptable
- 5 bad

- 6 very bad
- not measured
- at the specified station
- incomplete data

The Air Quality Information System contains the following information: the pollution index and the air quality index, a list of sites where air quality is measured, a list of sites where precipitation is measured, an overview of sites where air quality is measured and that are currently in operation (divided according to regions), operational and

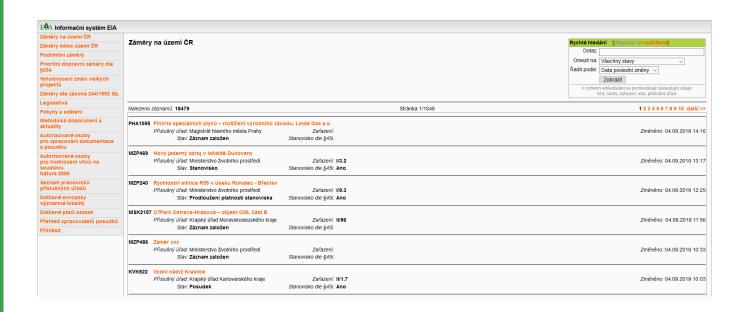
verified data on air pollution and precipitation, air pollution exceeding the limits, tabular reports from measuring stations, trends in the development of current smog concentrations, information about sources of pollution and incinerators, and universal reports on air pollution, precipitation, and emissions.

E) WATER MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PORTAL



The administrators of the portal are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment. The information on the portal is available in Czech and in English.

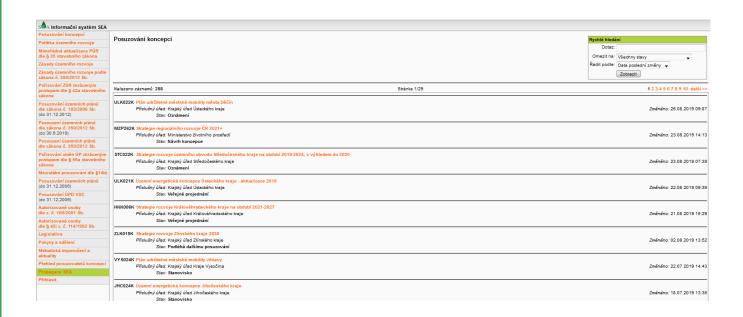
F) EIA AND SEA INFORMATION SYSTEM



The EIA information portal contains the following information: a list of projects in the Czech Republic, a list of projects outside the Czech Republic, a list of under-limit projects, a list of priority transport projects, evaluation of changes in major projects, a list of projects pursuant to the respective Act, legislation on EIA, methodological recommendations

and news, a list of persons authorized to conduct an EIA, a list of persons authorized to assess impacts on Natura 2000 sites, a list of officials of competent authorities, a list of relevant Habitats of European Interest and of relevant Bird Areas, and an overview of the authors of EIA reports.

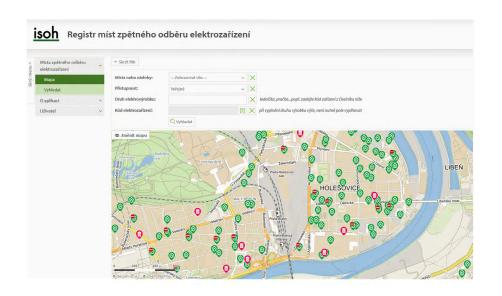
F) EIA AND SEA INFORMATION SYSTEM



The SEA information portal contains the following information: a list of strategies under assessment, information on spatial planning policy, principles of the spatial development of the respective regions, principles of spatial development pursuant to the respective Act, acquisition of principles of spatial planning development by a shortened procedure pursuant to the respective Act, acquisition

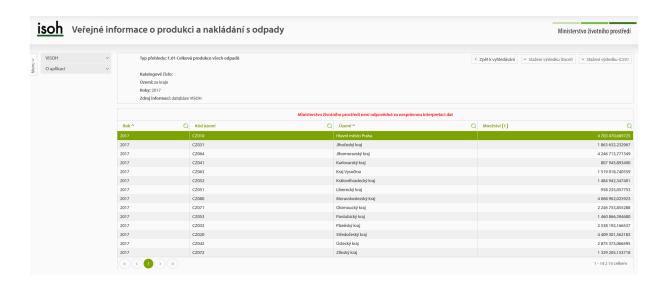
of changes of the spatial plan by a shortened procedure pursuant to the respective Act, a list of international assessments, a list of spatial plan assessments of spatial plans, a list of authorized persons, legislation on SEA, methodological recommendations and news, and an overview of authors of SEA reports.

G) WASTE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM



EXAMPLE

Register of electrical and electronic equipment take-back points in the Prague 7-Holesovice district



EXAMPLE

Data on total waste production for the year 2017 divided by the regions of the Czech Republic