

THE SKY ABOVE ZENICA

Below you will find:

1. Facts about the film and claims presented in the film about the ArcelorMittal steel factory (and integral coking plant) in Zenica, as presented to ArcelorMittal for “right of reply”.
2. ArcelorMittal’s statement in reference to the claims.

1.

Facts about the film and claims presented in the film

Prepared by Magic Hour Films

The film:

“The Sky Above Zenica” is a documentary film produced by Magic Hour Films in Denmark in coproduction with HBO Europe s.r.o. and Realstage, Bosnia and supported by the Danish Film Institute and Ministry of Culture, Canton Sarajevo.

The film is a creative documentary, set in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It follows a group of activists who are part of Eko Forum (a non-governmental citizens’ organisation) fighting pollution in the city. The film documents over 7 years the citizens’ struggle to improve living conditions for the people of Zenica and counter the harmful effects of pollution.

The documentary is character-driven and based on experiences and statements from citizens in Zenica, representatives of the environmental organization Eko Forum, local and federal government officials, as well as representatives of EBRD, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

According to citizens’ statements in the documentary, a large contributing factor to pollution in Zenica is the production activity at the ArcelorMittal steel plant which until the end of April 2024 included a coking plant, also operated by ArcelorMittal Zenica. It is important to note for context that the documentary was filmed and completed before the closure of the steel plant’s coking plant in April 2024. The fact of the closure was added to the documentary after its initial completion.

The right to make claims:

The documentary loyally tries to give voice to the sentiments of the citizens while also relaying facts. According to the European Court of Human Rights, the dissemination of such interviews is one of the most important ways in which the press can fulfil its role of "public watchdog" and the criticisms expressed in the documentary can be categorized as a mix of "value judgements" and statements of facts.

The documentary includes very well-established information about Zenica and the steel plant, and the fact-based content of the documentary has been checked for accuracy and documentation exist.

Magic Hour Films has provided ArcelorMittal with a right of reply as to the claims presented in the film.

The claims presented in the film:

Pollution and health:

The Coking Plant in Zenica emitted harmful pollution, and the emissions included benzene and benzo[a]pyrene, as well as other toxic substances.

Measurements of (certain chemicals in) the emissions were performed over a 4-week period in March 2022 and found concentrations significantly above safe limits. Hourly peak values of benzene e.g. were 50-250 times higher than safe limits in the area around the coking plant. For access to the full report:

<https://www.ekoforumzenica.ba/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-05-13-11-22-EKO-lzvjestaj-o-mjerenju-PAH-i-VOC-okoko-koksare-SB-OK.pdf>

The local population of Zenica suffers from high mortality and serious illnesses including a wide range of cancers, leukemia and childhood diabetes. Air pollution and emissions like those from the coking plant are known to cause elevated risks of potentially developing such diseases.

Proof of direct correlation between the Zenica citizens health issues and the emissions from the coking plant does not exist. In order to potentially establish (or not) a direct link between the diseases and the emissions, DNA tests of citizens in the Tetovo neighborhood close to the factory and of a control group further away were initiated in late 2023. The results are still pending.

Environmental permit and unfulfilled requirements:

According to the legislation and an environmental integrated permit from 2010 issued by the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism to ArcelorMittal, the company was obliged to measure and monitor emissions from the plant. However, the company postponed the obligation to carry out emission targets for several years stating various reasons, including economic reasons, and failed to make measurements until, and except for, the measurements performed in March 2022. As a result, the toxins emitted from the Coking Plant were not officially monitored on an ongoing basis (except for March 2022).

The company also failed to establish filtration to the coking plant that would have captured and purified the diffuse emissions and for many years unfiltered emissions were discharged into the air.

Before closure of the Coking Plant, during the years of filming and according to statements

from citizens, the production in the plant was active year-round, non-stop, 24 hours a day for many years, and emissions were particularly high at night and at weekends, where inspections were not in place or were limited.

For years, the ArcelorMittal company remained passive to the fact that the coking plant was an outdated and highly polluting facility allowing emissions far above the limit values, yet at the same time stated on several occasions that the company was deeply concerned with environmental protection

ArcelorMittal used better techniques to reduce emissions at its factories elsewhere in Europe, including Belgium, Italy and France. Thus "best available techniques" to reduce pollution were not implemented at the steel and coking plant in Zenica.

The above claims were brought to ArcelorMittal's attention. In exercise of the right of reply and in order to provide crucial context and clarifications, ArcelorMittal presented the following statement to the claims presented in the film. A summary of the statement is included as text cards in the film. Below is the full statement.

2.

Full statement by ArcelorMittal in reference to the claims presented in the film "The Sky Above Zenica"

Prepared by ArcelorMittal and formatted for publication by Magic Hour Films

Closure of the Coking Plant

ArcelorMittal announced in March 2024 that its coking plant in Zenica would permanently cease operation from 25/26 April 2024. This decision was made for a combination of reasons, including the state of the coke battery, economic and environmental reasons, as explained in the statement issued when the closure was announced.

After stopping the coke battery, and closing the coal fired power plant, total emissions of the Zenica plant will go down to the lowest levels since the beginning of operation of the steel making factory in Zenica (which started 132 years ago). The closure of the coking plant has resulted in an 80% decrease in diffuse emissions from the plant in Zenica.

Steps Taken to Address Emissions from the Coking Plant

The claim that ArcelorMittal failed to take any steps to address the emissions from the coking plant that were causing harm to Zenica residents is false.

It is true that emissions from the coking plant may include benzene and benzopyrene, but ArcelorMittal has implemented numerous maintenance and improvement measures over the years. A list of these improvements is available online (<https://zenica.arcelormittal.com/en/corporateresponsibility/environment/environmental-projects>).

Improvements include:

- The installation of electrostatic precipitators (“**ESPs**”) for cleaning the coke oven gas. ESPs remove tar from coke oven gas.
- Ceramic welding of coke ovens and replacement of the coke oven frames to reduce emissions, daily cleaning of devices for cleaning frames and doors.
- Repair of doors (mechanical and refractory) and regular door replacement.
- Daily inspection and maintenance of the water sealing system for the covers of the ascension pipes, and many other technical projects to reduce the overall environmental impact from the coke battery.
- Installation of a new charging car – reduces emissions during the charging of the coal

ArcelorMittal also planned spending €36 million on an end flue project to reduce overall emissions from the coke battery (implementation was started on this project, but stopped with the decision to close the coking plant).

It is therefore misleading to say that ArcelorMittal has failed to establish filtration. Coke plants are treated with repairs of cracks, refractory walling of coke ovens, and other maintenance – which ArcelorMittal has carried out fastidiously. Many of these measures are applied across our coking plants in Europe.

Since ArcelorMittal’s arrival in Zenica, ArcelorMittal have invested more than €100 million in various environmental protection initiatives. Furthermore, the company has a plan in place that outlines additional measure to enhance the plant’s performance. This plan is part of its long-term strategy to ensure sustainable operations and to contribute positively to the local community and environment.

The suggestion that there is something nefarious about the fact that the production in the plant was active year-round, non-stop, 24-hours a day for many years and that emissions were particularly high at night and at weekends where inspections were not in place or limited implies that ArcelorMittal specifically timed the release of emissions to avoid inspection. There is no basis for this allegation. Integrated production cannot be switched on and off at the touch of a button, therefore the planned release of emissions at night or on weekends is not feasible. ArcelorMittal Zenica regularly hosts inspection visits from the Ministry of the Environment and provides frequent updates on our obligations with regards to our integrated permit.

Health Outcomes of Zenica Residents

ArcelorMittal acknowledge the issue of air quality in Zenica, and that air pollution and public health are matters of public interest. The claim that the local population of Zenica suffers from high mortality and a wide range of serious illnesses and severe health issues that are in correlation with air pollution and emissions like those from the coking plant is vague.

To the extent that the documentary suggests that the coking plant is the sole or primary cause of illnesses in Zenica, this is wrong. There are no studies or evidence supporting this allegation. The causes of air pollution and its effects on the population are complex, with many contributing factors – including domestic fuel burning, traffic, industry, natural sources, topography, weather, temperature inversions and the height of emissions – which

are in a constant state of flux.

The suggestion that DNA test may establish a direct link between diseases suffered by the population of Zenica and the emissions from the coking plant is overly simplistic and concerning. Existing methods of testing for the presence of pollutants in people can only determine the *type* and not the *source* of the pollutant.

Benzene, benzopyrene and other chemicals that may be produced by the coking plant are also produced by a wide range of other common sources. Benzene exposure can be caused by vehicle exhausts, evaporation of petrol, cigarette smoking, and other industries (www.gov.uk/government/publications/benzene-general-information-incident-management-and-toxicology/benzene-general-information)

Tobacco use, for example, is widespread in Bosnia. The WHO estimates 40% of persons 15 and older use tobacco. (data.who.int/countries/070)

The country ranks number eight in the world in terms of smokers per capita. (www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/11/20/smoking-an-endemic-problem-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina)

Data from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation shows that in 2011 and 2021 tobacco ranked significantly higher than air pollution as a risk factor driving death and disability (with tobacco being the highest risk factor in 2011 and the second highest in 2021). (www.healthdata.org/research-analysis/health-by-location/profiles/bosnia-and-herzegovina)

Air pollution was only the fourth highest risk factor in 2011 and dropped to the sixth highest in 2021. This data clearly disproves that air pollution is the sole or primary cause of ill-health in the country, or Zenica specifically.

Failure to accurately reflect other factors contributing to health outcomes of Bosnian residents will give viewers a false impression that ArcelorMittal has been proven to be the sole or primary cause of illnesses of the Zenica population.

ArcelorMittal's compliance with integrated permit from Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism

ArcelorMittal operates the plant in Zenica on an integrated permit issued by the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism. This document is an integrated approach to environmental management, which means that it considers all environmental aspects related to a specific industrial activity, ensuring that all activities comply with environmental regulations. As a result, there are hundreds of specific measures listed in the permit. ArcelorMittal complies with the vast majority of these measures.

ArcelorMittal regularly hosts visits from the Ministry of Environment in Zenica, to update them on the actions ArcelorMittal has taken in response to their inspectors reports which are a requirement of the integrated permit. The 2023 inspection report lists certain measures to further improve ArcelorMittal's environmental performance, as well as ongoing measures related to specific industrial activities. All relevant measures are or have been addressed (except for those no longer valid due to the closure of the coking plant).

The measurements of emissions performed in March 2022 were carried out by the Kemal Kapetanović Institute of the University of Zenica and published in a report in May 2022 (the

Kapetanović Report). The report states that “We believe that it is necessary to carry out many more measurements at measuring points outside the company's circle over a longer period of time (at least one year) and at the same time look at the presence of organic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds whose presence was determined at the location of the coke battery, and only then make conclusions about the state of quality air with regard to [volatile organic compounds] and [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons]”.

Conclusion

The relevant context and clarifications detailed above is necessary to ensure a fair and accurate reflection of Arcelor Mittal’s operation of the coking plant in Zenica. It is not in the public interest to publish misleading, incomplete or inaccurate information even if the general subject of air pollution is one of public importance.