



24.11.2021

VN/25848/2021

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency  
registrator@naturvardsverket.se  
cc: Richard Kristoffersson (@naturvardsverket.se)

Notification by Sweden (Your number NV-06054-21 Viscaria)

## **Answer to the notification regarding the plans for reopening the operations at the Viscaria mine in Kiruna municipality, Norrbotten County, in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)**

Finland acknowledges receiving notification from Sweden concerning the start of an environmental impact assessment procedure (EIA) for Copperstone Viscaria AB's planned project to reopen copper and iron mine in Kiruna municipality.

Finnish Ministry of the Environment gave the opportunity for the public and the authorities to comment on the material provided by Sweden from 21 October to 12 November 2021. The material was displayed on the Ministry's website. An announcement was also published in two newspapers appearing in the impact area.

Statements were given by Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Lapland, Muonio municipality, the Regional Council of Lapland, Natural Resources Institute, Metsähallitus (state owned enterprise that manages and protects state-owned land and water areas), the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Reindeer Herders' Association and Finnish - Swedish Transboundary River Commission.

All responses included a view that Finland should participate into the EIA of the project in Sweden. Based on the received comments, and reflecting its own views, the Ministry of the Environment states that Finland will participate in the EIA procedure of the project. The following highlights some of the most important issues that the EIA's transboundary impact assessment must take into account.

The planned project could have a significant negative impact on the ecological or chemical status of rivers Tornionjoki and Muonionjoki as well as on Bay of Bothnia during and after the operation. The effluent could have a negative impact on the representativity of those habitats of the area of special conservation measures (SAC) of rivers Tornionjoki-Muonionjoki (FI301912) why they are included in the Natura 2000 network in Finland. This may result from either changes in the water quality or through indirect impacts on species typical for the habitat or both. The rivers are the most important natural breeding and juvenile



production area for salmon in the Baltic Sea basin and important also for other migrating fish.

Finland is expecting the EIA documentation to present a sufficient project description and to include the anticipated transboundary impacts to the water ecosystem mentioned above. Especially the factors that impact water quality are of importance e.g. chemicals to be used in the processes, anticipated surplus water amount and its content, properties, treatment methods and efficiency of the treatment of effluent generated in the process. The environmental objectives of the Water framework directive and the Marine strategy framework directive should be considered.

The EIA should pay particular attention to preparedness for accidents and disasters that could be caused by extreme weather events or other exceptional situations and could trigger significant environmental damage to the discharge water body. Also concrete mitigation measures to quickly manage the exceptional situation should be presented. In addition to direct impacts, indirect and other impacts should be included as described in annex IV of the EIA directive and in this respect also reindeer husbandry in Finland must be considered.

The water body is affected by a pressure from several existing and/or approved mining projects in Sweden and in Finland. Therefore the assessment of cumulative impacts from these several sources must be included in the EIA. Mining activities affecting the river basin must be planned in a way that they do not cause significant discharges and hydrological impact or in any other way adversely affect the integrity of the site Tornionjoki-Muonionjoki and its conservation objectives nor deteriorate the status of the water ecosystem.

The given statements and views contain many important and detailed remarks from authorities, expert institutions and the public that cannot be summarized briefly in this statement. They need to be examined and taken into account in their entirety in the Swedish EIA.

The whole EIA documentation should be submitted to Finland in Finnish and it must include clearly the transboundary impacts to Finland (also including a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment in the impact area in Finland). An alternative is to provide in Finnish a sufficient compilation, describing the project and its transboundary impacts in Finland, which takes into account the content requirements of the Espoo Convention (appendix II of the Convention). In the latter case, the EIA documentation can be submitted in Swedish. In addition to issues stated above, it is important that the project description in Finnish is exhaustive as well as information on predictive methods, underlying assumptions, relevant environmental data used as well as an identification of gaps in knowledge and uncertainties encountered in compiling the required information as stated in the Espoo Convention.



The given statements from Finland were submitted to Sweden already on 15 November 2021.

Juhani Damski  
Permanent Secretary

Seija Rantakallio  
Senior Ministerial Adviser



VALTIONEUVOSTO  
STATSRÅDET  
FINNISH GOVERNMENT

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**Asia / Sak / Case:**

VN/25848/2021

YM; Notification pursuant to Article 3, Espoo convention, Viscaria mine in Kiruna municipal

**Asiakirja / Dokument / Document:**

VN/25848/2021-YM-13

Answer to the notification regarding the plans for reopening the operations at the Viscaria mine in Kiruna municipality,

**Allekirjoitukset / Underskrifter / Signatures:**

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