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відповідатиме за отруєння Дністра**

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n-vestigate.

Who will be held responsible for contaminated Dniester River?

by Anatoli Shalaev (Ukraine)

Soon it will be a year since the major issue for Lviv region remains construction of the waste recycling plants as well as finding land plots as well as investor for them.

In early November of last year the Head of Lviv Regional State Administration, Oleg Synyutka, has officially presented to the community three locations, where such plants may be constructed: on the territories of the currently functioning waste dump in Dragobych region, State Mining and Chemical Enterprise "Sirka" in Yavoriv region, and the same "Sirka" enterprise, but in Novy Rozdil, where it is planned to assign the largest plot of 15 hectares for a plant.

While everybody discusses the possibility of building waste recycling plants in the Lviv region, it seems that the authorities have forgotten about all other major environmental issues in the region.

We talk about 17 thousand tons of acid tars that were delivered in 2003 to these territory of State Mining and Chemical Enterprise " Sirka " in Novy Rozdil, which is now left in ruins.



14 years later, Novy Rozdil citizens still remain face to face with the main environmental catastrophe. The more so the waste is the problem not only for Novy Rozdil and not even for the whole Lviv Region, it has a cross-border character.

Tar is the toxic waste formed as a result of petrochemicals purification with the help of concentrated sulfuric acid. This is viscous liquid of black color, which together with organic substances contains from 15% to 70 % of sulfuric acid. Acid tar is substance of the second class of hazard after radioactive waste.

Чим небезпечні гудронні відходи?

Як гудрони впливають на організм людини?

УРАЖАЮЧА ДІЯ НА ОРГАНИ ДИХАННЯ ТА ШКІРУ

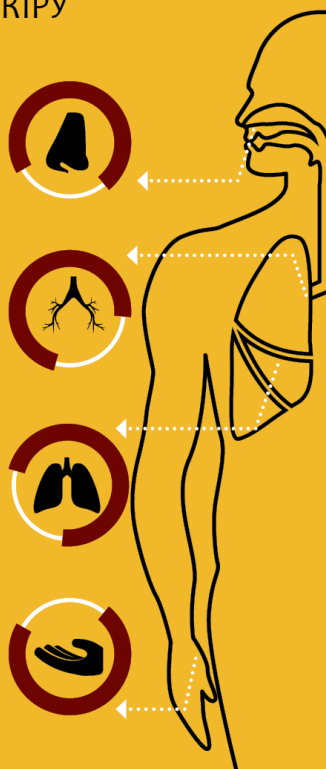
НІС
викликають алергічну реакцію з подальшими ускладненнями

БРОНХИ
провокують бронхіальну астму, можуть призвести до раку бронхів

ЛЕГЕНІ
можуть призвести до раку легень

ШКІРА

при контакті викликають алергічні подразнення та можуть призвести до раку шкіри



Що таке кислий гудрон?

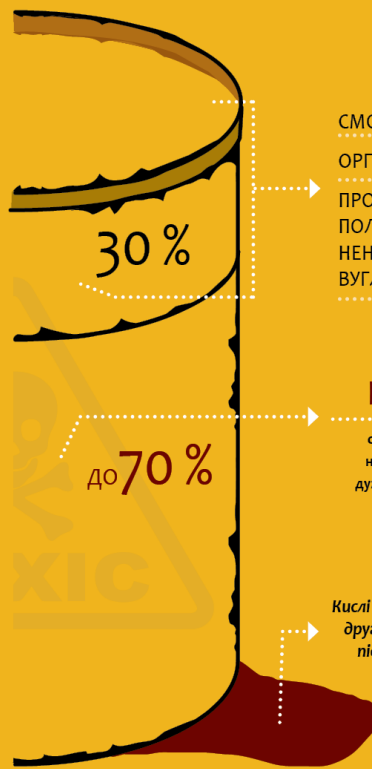
В'ЯЗКА РІДИНА ЧОРНОГО КОЛЬОРУ

СМОЛИСТІ РЕЧОВИНИ
ОРГАНІКА
ПРОДУКТИ ПОЛІМЕРИЗАЦІЇ
НЕНАСИЧЕНИХ ВУГЛЕВОДІВ

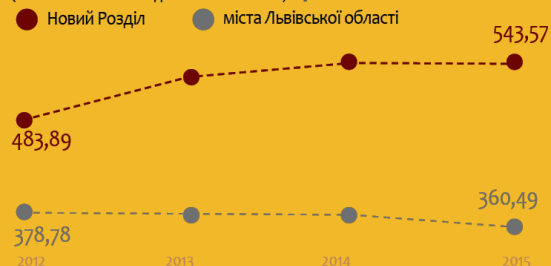
СІРЧАНА КИСЛОТА

одна з найсильніших неорганічних кислот, дуже їдка та небезпечна

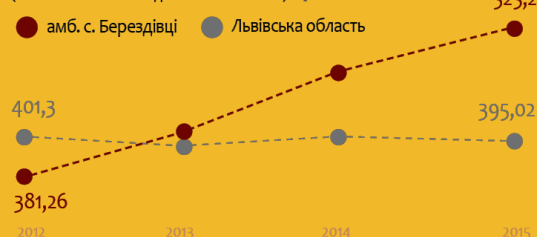
Кислі гудрони є речовинами другого класу небезпеки після радіоактивних



ЗАХВОРЮВАНІСТЬ ОРГАНІВ ДИХАННЯ. (ВИЯВЛЕНІ ВПЕРШЕ СЕРЕД ВСЬОГО НАСЕЛЕННЯ)* - [показник на 1000 нас.]

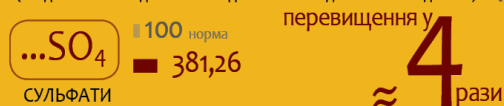


ЗАХВОРЮВАНІСТЬ ОРГАНІВ ДИХАННЯ. (ВИЯВЛЕНІ ВПЕРШЕ СЕРЕД ВСЬОГО НАСЕЛЕННЯ)* - [показник на 1000 нас.]

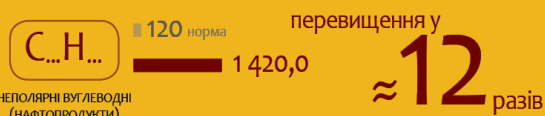


* - За даними МОЗ України, Департамент охорони здоров'я, Львівської обласної державної адміністрації, Обласний медичний інформаційно-аналітичний центр.

ПЕРЕВИЩЕННЯ НОРМ У ПРОБАХ ПОВЕРХНЕВИХ ВОД. (СКИД ЗВОРОТНІХ ВОД З ТЕРИТОРІЇ РДГХП «СІРКА» СХІД. КАНАЛОМ В Р. ДНІСТЕР)** - [мг/дм³]



ПЕРЕВИЩЕННЯ НОРМ У ПРОБАХ ґРУНТУ В ОКОЛОЛІЦІ ОЗЕРА «ГЛИБОКЕ» БІЛЯ СКЛАДУ ГУДРОНІВ (ТЕРИТОРІЯ РДГХП «СІРКА») - [мг/кг]



ПЕРЕВИЩЕННЯ НОРМ У ПРОБАХ ґРУНТУ В ОКОЛОЛІЦІ ОЗЕРА «ГЛИБОКЕ» БІЛЯ СКЛАДУ ГУДРОНІВ (ТЕРИТОРІЯ РДГХП «СІРКА») - [мг/кг]



** - дослідження проведені Держекоінспекцією у Львівській області під час планової перевірки у 2016 році.

We were assured of that once again by one of the [expeditions to "Sirka" that took place last year](#). Of 17 thousand tons of tars unloaded on the territory of the former enterprise, less than half of it was left. And

all of that was due to the fact that neither the owner of tars nor authorities thought about fencing the tar waste off. For this very reason a larger part of chemicals together with rains and melted water got into the lake Glyboke, located nearby and then to the Dniester river.



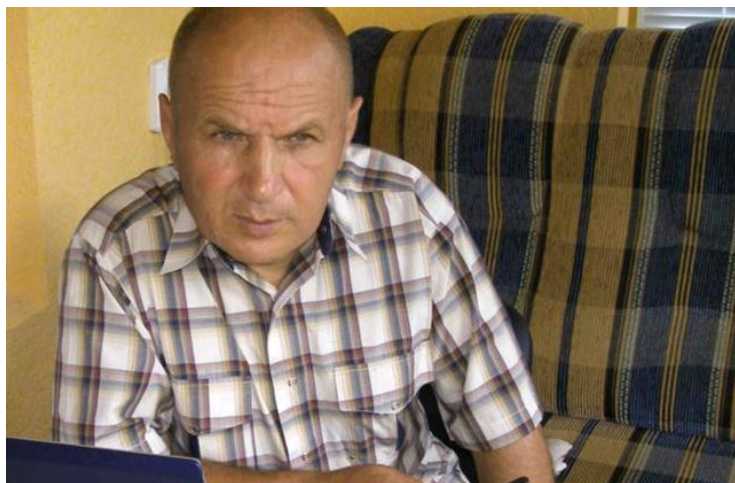
The Dniester River is a source of drinking water for millions of Ukrainians, and it is the main source of drinking water in Moldova.



The lake Glyboke itself is part of recreation area of the Dniester River, which is among a dozen of largest rivers in Europe. The basins of the Dniester are in Ukraine and Moldova, and riparian countries are also Poland and Romania. So if Novy Rozdil [tars get into the Dniester](#), then all toxic substances can be easily spread and contaminate European waters.

International scheme of tars getting to Lviv region and Moldova

Together with journalists from Moldova and Hungary in the framework of transboundary investigation N-ost we managed to find out how thousands of tons of tars got into Novy Rozdil, and who is behind it. For the first time Varianty publish official documents received during investigation, which confirm that hazardous substances brought to Ukraine have Hungarian roots.



As Moldovan journalist Tudor Yaschenko said the places of destination for tars were two countries at once – Ukraine and Moldova.

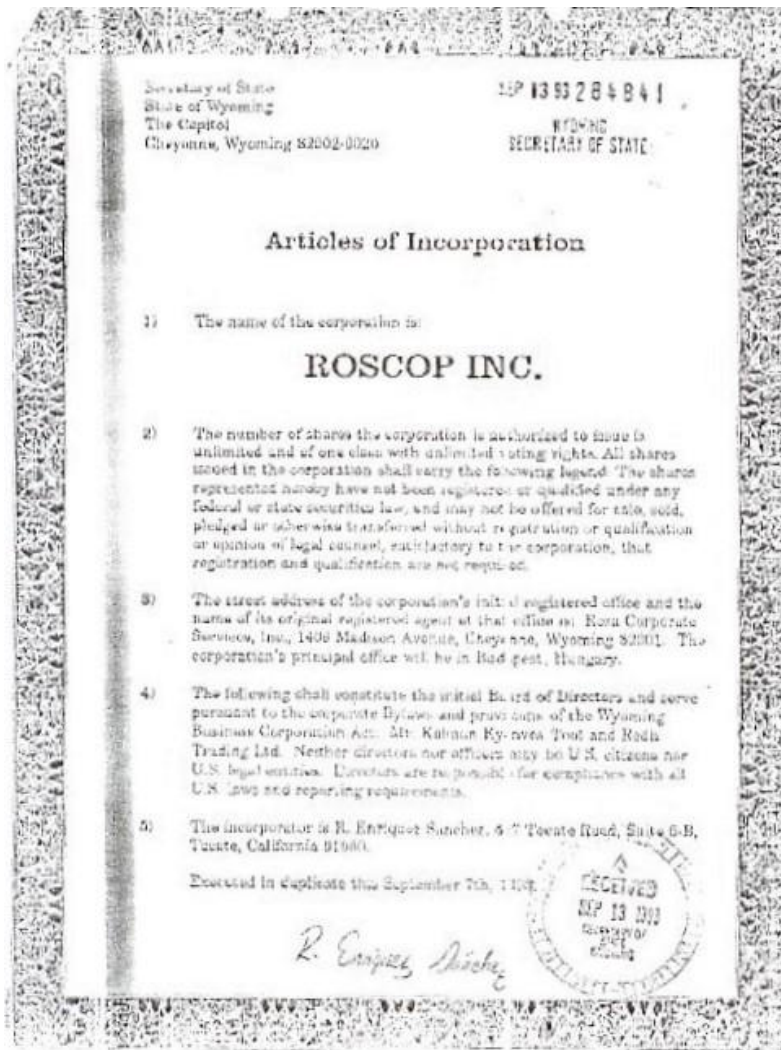
In XX century at Hungarian petrochemical enterprises a great amount of production waste was stockpiled. Because they had an issue of accession to European Union at stake, Hungary was posed a condition to get rid of petroleum waste, that is tar.

By joining the EU, the country – a member should obligatory sign a number of [environmental EU directives](#) – [documents](#) that force the country during a certain period of time to bring to corresponding

European requirements all the waters, soils, minimize harmful emissions and so on. If these requirements are not implemented they will impose sanctions against the offending country, or in case with Hungary, refuse accession to European Union.

Having thousands of tons of accumulated toxic tars Hungary had to find ways how to get rid of them not polluting environment.

That is why Hungarians found American offshore company ROSCOP inc., which decided to solve the problem.



“For a reasonable amount of money, as if for processing, a batch of 25 thousand tons of tars was brought to Ukraine. Representatives of ROSCOP inc. also proposed part of this waste as alternative to expensive fuel to Rybnitsa cement-slate industrial complex (Moldova, – ed.), assuring that this will allow to save 12-15% of gas for the enterprise, – journalist Tudor Yaschenko notes. – it was noted In official certificates that tars can be used in production of construction materials as well. And the price per ton of such waste was quite attractive, only 12 dollars”.

Therefore at the end of 2003 it became known that to the cement slate industrial complex instead of alternative fuel tar was brought, which is not safe for health of people and also for

environment. That is why in the Moldovan town of Rybnitsa scandal broke out, and Transnistria mass media started criticizing the administration of the enterprise mercilessly.

In February 2004 the arbitration director of Rybnitsa cement slate industrial complex at that time Evgen Bednikov specially organized press conference to inform how petrochemicals have got to production site and what their purpose was.

“Evgen Bednikov explained that in January 8, 2003 the administration of cement slate industrial complex signed a contract with the company ROSCOP inc. to get 10 thousand tons of tars. But in this case one more establishment was involved – company «Spetservice», reporting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, – journalist continues. – At the beginning ROSCOP inc. has sold all the waste to «Spetservice», and then has bought them back and has resold to Rybnitsa cement slate industrial complex”.

But before the first batch was sent to Rybnitsa, Hungarian tar was mixed with sand and clay. So the first portion of waste, a volume of 928 tons, has got to the industrial complex in April 2003.

It is interesting that the waste was delivered one week before the change of leadership of the cement slate industrial complex.

Already at the beginning of May the leadership of ROSCOP inc., having met with director of industrial complex Evgen Berdnikov, started insisting on a quick implementation of contract conditions as for receiving the rest of tars.

According to preliminary calculations Rybnitsa cement slate industrial complex has bought 10 thousand tons of tars from offshore company ROSCOP inc. at a price of 120 thousand dollars.

“At the meeting with journalists, Evgen Berdnikov announced that he felt worried that somehow the waste was not used in Ukraine before, where there were a lot of cement plants, so he started digging deeper. Subsequently his colleagues from Nikolaev cement plant and also Lviv enterprises advised him to be very careful, because when this tar was burnt a lot of toxic gases got into atmosphere. They also told Berdnikov that in Ukrainian enterprises there were cases of mass poisoning of people who burnt tar”, – Tudor Yaschenko noted.

However, finally shit has hit the fan only when Berdnikov got the fax with the information that Hungarian company via which tar has got into Ukraine, is not liable for the consequences of contract signed with administration of Rybnitsa cement slate industrial complex, for credibility of certificates and also for data concerning the consequences of burning tar on the territory of Rybnitsa and the whole of Transnistria.

After such incident administration of Rybnitsa cement slate industrial complex applied to the leadership of that very company ROSCOP inc., demanding to pull out of the deal and take the waste back.

At the same time businessmen approached Kiev Institute of Hygiene and Toxicology asking the experts to conduct study concerning safety of received tars.

The journalist Tudor Yaschenko told that all attempts of people from Rybnitsa to get rid of tars were in vain, even after the local Prosecutor office started criminal procedure.

The company ROSCOP inc. quickly disappeared from the scene: they stopped answering telephone calls or they said that they never heard about the existence of that company.

After all, at the end of 2004 the Administration of Rybnitsa decided to bury tars in a specially equipped sarcophagus not far from cement slate industrial complex. Its official name is the warehouse of temporary storage of modifier MF-2».

Kiev scientists confirmed that waste is extremely toxic and when burnt, substances are escaping that contributes to development of cancer diseases. And according to official statistics the level of cancer in Rybnitsa is twice as high as in the town of Rezin that is located on the other bank of the Dniester.

In Rybnitsa Center of Hygiene and Epidemiology they confirmed that tar is buried not far from cement slate industrial complex in huge reinforced concrete hole, the bottom of which is covered with polyethylene film. On top the waste is covered by the same film and backfilled with a layer of clay, which is covered with grass.

“As we managed to find out from official sources this sarcophagus is under permanent observation and the tar is packed reliably that is why at the moment they do not carry threat neither to environment nor to the health of local citizens.

But in several days Rybnitsa newspaper “Dobry den” making reference to Ministry of Agriculture and Environment has written that according to the Decree of President Evgen Shevchuk starting from spring 2016 State Services do not monitor the tars”, – Tudor Yaschenko concludes making a helpless gesture.

Tars on “Sirka”

More than 17 thousand tons of harmful tars the State Enterprise of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine “Spetservice” has brought to the territory of State Mining and Chemical Enterprise “Sirka” in Novy Rozdil in 2003.

According to contract #66 of December 16, 2002, the supplier of toxic matter is “Spetservice” in a person of Nikolaenko B.I., and recipient – ROSCOP inc. in a person of Nechaev I.I. It is also mentioned there that “Spetservice” receives 3 thousand tons of tars, at the cost of 26 dollars per ton. According to these documents the waste was purchased at a cost of 78 thousand dollars but they brought more than 17000 tons to Novy Rozdil!

In the part “Product quality” it says that “quality of supplied raw material should answer the requirements of TY Y B.2.7.-24.6-30434770-001-2002, class MF-1, MF-2, MF-3, that are confirmed by corresponding documents”. So the quality of raw material was confirmed by certificate of the producer, the Hungarian oil company MOL.

We have found another contract for supply of 25 thousand tons of tars to Ukraine - # 8-0810-0 “Organizing of transportation and use of tars created after rectification, distillation of oil on the basis of Regulation of Basel Convention and Council under number EWC of 01.02. 1993”. However this contract was made between several companies – Hungarian Geohidroterv Kft. (further – warrantor or notified person), American ROSCOP inc. and its Budapest representative Metrateg Kft. (further - supplier) and State Enterprise of Ministry of Internal Affairs “Spetservice” (further recipient).

According to agreement the warrantor that is Hungarian company Geohidroterv Kft., that won the tender for preliminary tars processing before sending them to Ukraine, had to neutralize them and turn them into bulk and recipient, that is “Spetservice”, according to other contract signed on 10.08.2001 had to get technology of preparation of acid tar for usage and then finally to destroy it.

“The recipient (that is “Spetservice”) has a right to refuse from accepting if the composition of tar waste differs from the parameters provided in appendix”, – it says in the text of contract.

It was also noted in the document that the main way of using tar is to add it at the time of production of asphalt. Although as practice has shown later tar was simply burnt first, that was the reason for mass intoxication of the workers of Lviv enterprises.

Some months after signing this contract, “Spetservice” has sent documents for expertise, in which the Hungarian intermediary company Geohidroterv Kft. has written down the composition of tar and also the samples of received substances.

Subsidiary Lviv enterprise “Ecohimsert” of the Institute of Mining and Chemical Industry conducting expertise found out that the results of the study of Geohidroterv Kft. company are not justified and the level of hazardous substances is lowered. The more so the experts found out that tars supplied did not pass through technology of neutralization, which was envisaged in the contract.

But “Spetservice” did not manage to return the supplied tars to Hungary, so Ukrainian State Enterprise as well as Moldovan Cement Slate Industrial Complex had got into well-planned fraud, becoming the magnates, but not of the oil but of the toxic tars.

In Ukraine criminal procedure started against Oil Company MOL, and Hungarian policemen conducted their own investigation and interrogated the representative of the enterprise doctor Fridiesh Bozhik and Hungarian Zholt Shaigo who was talking as witness. However the organizers of tar scheme managed to escape punishment, placing responsibility on dummy companies specially involved into tars supply schemes.

In the following of our request, the Ministry of Internal Affairs informed us that at the moment State Enterprise “Spetservice” is disposed of the possibility to conduct financial economic activity because of prejudicial investigation # 42014000000001738. Prosecutor General Office has also taken from the enterprise all electronic carriers of information, which contained software of accounting, and taxation reports, contracts, primary and integrated accounting documents.

It seemed that Hungarian police could highlight this complicated scheme but the fact that Special Cases Directorate investigated this case dispelled hopes of Ukrainians for happy end.

“It is worth mentioning that State Enterprise of the Ministry of Internal Affairs “Spetservice” is a subject of entrepreneurial activity, it acts on the basis of statute, it is a legal person and according to the article 96 of the Civil Code of Ukraine it independently is responsible for its obligations. With that the Ministry of Internal Affairs has no right to interfere into economic activity of the enterprise”, – they answered in Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

But the worst and the most offensive in this situation is not the fact that crooks are not punished, that a lot of budget money was spent on toxic waste, but that innocent people suffer until now because of tars are left to fend for themselves on the territory of State Mining and Chemical Enterprise “Sirka” in Novy Rozdil. And the people are not only from Novy Rozdil.

As we mentioned, tar is located close to the lake Gluboke, which is connected with the Dniester by a canal. Environmentalists were taking samples of soil and water to define their level of contamination with chemicals many times.

The last time Lviv environmental inspection conducted expertise of water samples taken close to tar dump and at the point of flow of Glyboke Lake to the Dniester River in 2016. The results recorded an excess of allowable sanitary-environmental norms again.

“The results of the laboratory studies, in accordance with fisheries norms, have shown above the established maximum allowable concentrations in discharges of wastewaters from the territory of State Mining and Chemical Enterprise “Sirka” to the Dniester river. The combined sample of soil, taken to the south from tar storage place, also exceeded the maximum permissible concentration for soil. For identified violations of environmental legislation administrative charges were brought against the enterprise, the amount of administrative fine was 850 hrn. , it is currently paid”, – that was the answer of the State Environmental Inspection in the Lviv Region.



As confirmed by the director of “Sirka” Volodymyr Venchak, as a result of the audit, penalties were applied to the enterprise for pollution of waters and land.

“Because of tars staying on the territory of State Mining and Chemical Enterprise “Sirka”, all the time the enterprise appealed to people’s deputies, to environmental and law enforcement bodies, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prime Minister of Ukraine. However there were no improvements regarding hazardous substances”, – Volodymyr Venchak answered.

In November deputies of Novy Rozdil city council protested against construction of waste processing plant on its territory at their extraordinary session and expressed their concerns about interaction of these tars and other hazardous waste on the territory of “Sirka” with uncontrolled import of solid waste.

We also decided to give samples of water from Glyboke Lake and tars to independent scientific-service company “Ottava” to define the content of heavy metals in water and toxic substances.

According to the Department of Health Care data of Lviv Regional Administration as of September, 50 cases of cancer were recorded in Novy Rozdil, whereas for 2015 – 80 cases; in settlement Rozdil as of September there were 4 cases, which is half of what was in 2015.

During nine months of the current year, more than 6100 people were ill with cancer in Lviv Region, although this figure was larger in 2015 - more than 8500 people (screen with statistics).

If official statistics on cancer in Novy Rozdil, surrounding settlements and in Lviv region as a whole show some kind of positive dynamics, then the issue of respiratory diseases of the citizens of Novy Rozdil causes considerable concern.

Tars travelling in Ukraine

As the representative of the oil company MOL doctor Fridiesh Bozhik, was saying at interrogation of Hungarian policemen in 2003 "Spetservice" informed Hungarians that it is not able to receive tars, then, Geohidroterv Kft. has found other contractor in Ukraine – the company "Osma-Oil", which supposedly had all the necessary permits.

"In this case the company "Osma-Oil" was taking obligation upon itself to dispose of hazardous waste at thermal power plants, and it defined Dobrotvirska TPP as a place for that. After finishing utilization at TPP, on the basis of similar permits as "Spetsservice", "Osma-Oil" produced industrial modifier from tar in Drogobych, and the products were delivered to Donetsk factory", – it is written in interrogation of Fridiesh Bozhik.

There we really managed to find out that after Novy Rozdil acid tars traveled across almost the whole of Ukraine. In addition, it should be noted that in no case without scandal. Therefore we present a list of locations where toxic waste was taken and what was the purpose of "eco-travels".

We would like to stress that those are the places that we managed to find.

Tars travels on the territory of Lviv region:

Novy Rozdil "Sirka" – more than 17 thousand tons storage.

Mykolaiv cement plant – attempt to burn.

Rozdil ceramic plant – attempt to burn.

Dobrotvor TPP – around 3 thousand tons of tar waste are left on the territory of TPP. Attempt to burn.

Drogobych, territory of State Enterprise "UVTK" BAT "Prikarpatbud" – during September-October 2004 part of the wagons with tar waste from Dobrotvor TPP was transported to the rented site of the enterprise.

Ukraine:

Company "Osma-Oil" – has sold modifier to other construction companies outside Lviv region.

Town Snizhne of Donetsk region – Donetsk company "RegionPromSoiuz" (it is in composition of scientific production corporation "Ukrainian environmental technologies", together with this firm service company "MonolitBud" was created, Kyiv).

Sumy region – company BAT "Seredyno-Budsky plant of metallurgy equipment".

Ivani-Frankivsk region, settlement Zabolotiv – company "Masiovska".

International transportation of tars:

Rybnitsk Cement Slate Industrial Complex (Transnistria) – attempt to burn, placement of 900 tons.

Across Danube close to Izmail port – there the permit for import and sale of goods was issued by Danube basin sanitary-epidemiological station, naming the waste "construction additive", which is suitable for production of concrete.

And this is only a drop in the ocean, because Hungarian tar getting into the Dniester travels downstream to the depth of eko-Europe.

What to do with tars further on and how they threaten Ukraine?

The community of Novy Rozdil and surrounding villages seek to answer this question for the 14th year. According to the norms of international law, Basel convention [that was ratified by the Verhovna Rada of Ukraine in 1999](#), Ukraine has a right to demand the reimport of those hazardous substances back to Hungary (article 8 of Basel convention). However, at the highest state level, we do not see the will to appeal to Secretariat of Convention with the requirement to provide reimport of those substances.

Another way of solving this is to define territories of the town and nearby villages the zone of environmental emergency, which will give possibility in a separate line in the budget of the country to solve environmental problems of the region, which assumed trans-boundary importance long time ago.

In 2012 the residents of Novy Rozdil even began the procedure for conducting a [local referendum](#) on this issue – initiative group was registered and they collected signatures of more than 10% of population, but due to the abolition of the law “On national and local referendums” in November 2012, these initiatives have not managed to be realized.

Given that [Hungarian tars are constantly washed away into the waters of transboundary Dniester River](#) and Ukraine does nothing to finally stop the pollution and destruction of the health of its citizens, they have to find a way out of tar disaster at local level.

According to legislation certain zone of environmental emergency can be accepted only by the Parliament or President of Ukraine decree. However before that the Emergency Service has to determine, to what extent these allowable concentrations of chemicals are exceeded. And only after that, if the data corresponds to classifiers, rescuers officially ascertain the fact that this area falls within the definition “environmental emergency zone”.

Ecologist candidate of geographical sciences Myron Kolodko notes that currently almost the only and really effective way to combat tar for “Sirka” is a mechanical one.

“Tar should be collected in special containers and in order to prevent the spread of these toxic substances to place them away from water. This can be done on the same “Sirka” because on its territory there are enough non- functional buildings where rain does not fall. You can move closed containers with tar there so they do not poison the lake Glyboke and respectively surface water and the Dniester River. Now this is really the easiest and perhaps the only way out of this situation”.

This investigation has been carried out with the support of [n-vestigate](#), an investigative network by n-ost and four partners from Eastern Europe that implements cooperative, which more deeply anchors investigative journalism within each country's respective society.