SERBIA MUST SPEND TO TACKLE 'DEVASTATING' ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

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Serbias fiscal advisory council urged the government on Tuesday to begin investing 1.3 percent of GDP to tackle devastating environmental problems including air pollution and an acute lack of sewage treatment facilities.

Serbia processes less than 10 percent of its waste water and has a persistent problem with unregulated landfills, the government-appointed Fiscal Council said. The two largest cities, Belgrade and Novi Sad, dump raw sewage directly into the Danube and Sava rivers.

The council said an improvement in public finances gave Serbia room to spend around 500 million euros ($580 million) a year on cleaning up the environment.

Serbia emerged into a public surplus in 2017 and expects to do the same this year, with growth forecast at 3.5 percent. It has cut its public debt to 57 percent of GDP from 75 percent in the space of two years.

But it currently invests only 0.7 percent of its economic output in the environment, while many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe spend around 2 percent.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-environment/serbia-must-spend-to-tackle-devastating-environmental-problems-advisors-idUSKBN1JM1JI

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