

Unfortunately, Lake Gazivode has become a landfill, and this problem of environmental pollution or negligence is a common problem of several countries.

The Kosovo Democratic Institute, which is part of the Transparency International organization, and the non-governmental organization from Pristina, "Let's do it, Kosovo", are warning through the media these days about the pollution of rivers in Kosovo and Metohija, especially Lake Gazivoda. They claim that Lake Gazivode is the most popular landfill and that the lack of care for the environment is common to both Serbian and Albanian politicians in Kosovska Mitrovica.

However, this local government has nothing to do with Gazivode, which is a source of drinking water for more than a third of Kosovo's 1.8 million inhabitants, and the water from the lake is also used for cooling in two coal-fired power plants.

The regional water supply system supplies Kosovska Mitrovica, Zvečan and Zubin Potok, and is located in it. The mayor of Zubin Potok, Srdjan Vulović, says that this lake is nothing more polluted than any river in this part of the world, in which citizens throw municipal waste on all sides. He adds that despite the garbage, the water from Gazivoda is of impeccable quality.

- If 100 units of some chemicals are needed to bring drinking water from the Sava, Danube or Morava, 4 are needed for Lake Gazivoda, the water from that lake is perfectly safe to drink. Aeration and purification are constantly being done, since the water is taken from a depth of 100 meters and there is not enough oxygen. In order for everything to be according to the protocol, a certain amount of chlorine is added, so that the lake is not polluted, but the cleanest lake in Europe - claims Vulović.

He adds that the environmental media chase of the non-governmental organization "Let's do it, Kosovo" is an attempt to provoke a political problem around the lake, which is of strategic importance. They need tension, there is not a single problem in Gazivode, obviously someone is trying to make it, says the mayor of Zubin Potok.

- About ten days ago, they asked me from Pristina to increase the delivery of water, since they didn't even have enough to drink, we let them have another half a cubic meter per second. We are cooperating on a technical level, there are no problems, but someone probably needs a political problem - says Vulović.

### **The strategic lake is still endangered**

Due to the strategic importance of Lake Gazivoda, because it provides water for most of Kosovo where Serbs live, the fact that almost 26 percent of this large accumulation lake built in 1977 is located in the territory of Novi Pazar and Tutin falls into the background.

During heavy rains, the river Raška carries garbage through Novi Pazar, and the picture is even worse in Tutinibar. Kau, through which the rain flows in the part of Gazivoda above the dam, huge landfills are being created on the water.

Mesrudin Eleskovic, a communal inspector from Tutin, says that the biggest problem in Gazivode does not come from Serbia or Kosovo, but from Montenegro.

- Rožaje has a landfill on the very bank of the Ibar, every water level after the rain pulls half of that landfill into the lake, that is the biggest problem, we also have local garbage, but it is much less. This year, the lake is much lower, it is not filling up, whether it empties the dam more or the inflow of water is smaller, I don't know, but there is garbage even now, the shore is overgrown with grass, so it is not visible - says Elesković.

### **Montenegro ignores the problem**

Eleskovic adds that Srbijavode manages this area, but that little is invested in the maintenance and cleaning of the lake. The water is of good quality for now, but if the application of garbage from the landfill from Rožaje continues, we do not know how long it will take, he says.

- As the municipal administration from Tutin, we proposed to build some dams, nets on the Ibar, to somehow wait for that garbage, to pick it up from time to time and clean everything, however, there is nothing of that. The local self-government does not have the means to deal with that. Fishermen and other associations clean up from time to time on their own initiative, but that is not enough - warns Elesković.

Our interlocutor says that the representatives of the municipality of Tutin went to Rozaje several times, as he says, they fought to solve the problem, but everything remained as promised.

- It is obvious that this problem must be solved at the interstate level, because the quality of water is affected by garbage and wastewater from any part of Serbia or Montenegro that reached the lake - concludes Elesković.

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