

Joint consultations with Albania and Montenegro were held by the Implementation Committee under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) on 5 February 2021. Albania and Montenegro have agreed to establish a joint technical working group on “Monitoring & assessment” and to develop and implement an information exchange protocol to operationalize their cooperation on the shared Cijevna/Cem River basin. The Committee is assisting Albania and Montenegro as part of an advisory procedure – a unique tool, which distinguishes this body from other similar mechanisms and enables it to engage with countries seeking to resolve water issues in a non-confrontational manner.

The current advisory procedure was initiated in response to a request made by Montenegro related to its concerns about the possible transboundary impact of planned additional small hydropower plants on the Cijevna/Cem River in Albania. Albania has subsequently accepted to participate in the advisory procedure. The Implementation Committee is assisting the two Parties to improve cooperation under their 2018 Framework Agreement on Mutual Relations in the Field of Management of Transboundary Waters and the bilateral commission established therein. Such assistance facilitates the implementation of the Water Convention, with special regard to the obligations to hold consultations, exchange information and data and carry out joint monitoring and assessment.

The Implementation Committee under the UNECE Water Convention was established by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention in 2012. It consists of nine members – lawyers and water management professionals – that were elected by the Meeting of the Parties to serve in personal capacity (Kari Kinnunen, Johan G. Lammers, Stephen McCaffrey, Martins Paparinskis, Anne Schulte-Wülwer-Leidig, Pedro Cunha Serra, Attila Tanzi, Ivan Zavadsky and Dinara Ziganshina).

Delegations of Albania and Montenegro to the Committee’s 12th meeting (online, 4-5 February 2021) comprised governmental institutions dealing with water management, energy planning and environmental protection and were headed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro, respectively.

Source: unece.org