

In October 2017, the Ministry of Energy awarded Turkish Company Ayen Enerji, in cooperation with the Albanian company Fusha, the contract for the construction of the Kalivaç hydroelectric power plant on the Vjosa river. In September 2020, however, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, in conjunction with the National Environmental Agency of Albania (AKM) rejected Ayen's environmental impact assessment and issued a Negative Environmental Declaration, essentially stopping Ayen-Alb from proceeding with the construction of the HPP. Ayen-Alb filed a lawsuit against the Ministry in February 2021 before the Administrative Court of Tirana, asking that the Negative Declaration be declared null and void.

The construction of the Kalivaç dam has been controversial, with local residents and national and international NGOs protesting the project. Several organizations and 39 members of the community supported the Ministry of Tourism and Environment defense case through expert opinions and testimony.

The Administrative Court of Tirana rejected as unfounded the lawsuit brought by the Kalivaç HPP developer, Turkish-Albanian consortium Ayen-Alb, against the Albanian Ministry of Tourism and Environment. The lawsuit contested the Albanian Ministry of Tourism and Environment's Negative Environmental Declaration, a declaration that rejected Ayen-Alb's environmental assessment impact, thus halting construction of the dam indefinitely. The news was first announced by activist Ulrich Eichelmann, CEO of Riverwatch, on Twitter. EcoAlbania, an environmental NGO that had filed an amicus brief in support of the Ministry's decision, confirmed the news through a press release.

Olsi Nika, a Biologist for EcoAlbania, welcome the news, stating that the Court's decision "represents another message to the [Albanian] government that it must once and for all give up on building hydroelectric power plants and declare the Vjosa Valley a National Park as soon as possible."

Activists both locally and abroad, as well as celebrities such as Leonardo di Caprio have spoken out in support of the river becoming a National Park, in order to protect it from destructive and exploitative developments.

Source: [exit.al](http://exit.al)