

The High Administrative Court rejected the eco-association's appeal against the Senj wind farm project, with a capacity of 156 MW, which ended the last administrative dispute initiated due to the decision to build the project without an environmental impact assessment, despite the legal obligation.

The High Administrative Court rejected the appeal of environmental organizations for procedural reasons, taking the position that the law does not give associations the right to challenge a decision made in the form of an opinion. As previously announced, there will be 13 units on the network by the end of the year, and the remaining 26 wind turbines by May next year. The previous dispute of the Biom association over the Senj wind farm, which was joined by the organizations Sunce and Zelena akcija, was initiated in 2018, and the first dispute was initiated in 2014.

Biom then filed the first lawsuit for the Senj wind farm, since the environmental impact assessment procedure conducted at the time did not identify possible impacts on the bald eagle, which nests at the site of the project. Moreover, in that study, it was stated that bald eagles do not use the location of the intervention at all.

Against the profession

From 2013 until today, the ministry has not taken into account the opinions of its expert bodies and leading institutions for the protection of birds on the harmfulness of this project, according to eco associations. Although the expert body of the ministry and the Institute for Ornithology of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the leading scientific institution for the protection of birds in Croatia, shared Biom's position on the importance of the nature conservation site and the potential harmfulness of the Senj wind farm, the project continued.

At that moment, the investor in the Senj wind farm construction project, which started in 2013, became the Chinese state-owned company Norinco International Cooperation, which is buying a majority stake in the company Energija projekt, which has been developing this wind farm since the beginning.

The Chinese company will take over the location and the project in 2018, but plans to implement a modified project in relation to the two previous versions for which an environmental impact assessment was conducted. Then the Ministry of Environmental Protection decides that for the wind farm, despite the legal obligation, it is not necessary to conduct an environmental impact assessment procedure, although it is a project that is even larger in strength than the controversial wind farm Krš-Padjena. Biom points out that the ministry made that decision in secret.

Double standards

When the Chinese company took over the location with the changed project, the ministry made a decision that it is not necessary to carry out environmental procedures, because in the opinion of the ministry, permits issued in procedures initiated before Croatia's accession to the EU are valid for this wind power plant.

"It is important to note here that the entire procedure passed by the services of the ministry responsible for nature protection, including the expert body of the ministry, which is evident from the fact that the documentation published by law on the ministry's website was not published on this occasion." This means that in Croatia it is possible for such a large project as the Senj wind farm to go through the whole procedure for obtaining a location and construction permit without involving the nature protection sector. It was stated, of course, contrary to the EU directives and the legislation of the Republic of Croatia, so the associations filed a lawsuit ", commented Željka Rajković from Biom.

Source: energetika-net.com