

The Coalition for the Protection of the Rivers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the occasion of March 14 - World River Day for Action, citing the Declaration on the Protection of the Rivers of the Western Balkans, requires the competent authorities at all levels of government to immediately abolish public incentives for the production of energy from small hydropower plants (SHP).

The coalition recalled that the Declaration on the Protection of the Western Balkans Rivers was adopted at a conference on SHPP held in November 2019 in Sarajevo. The conference was organized by Arnika, the Environmental Center and WWF Adria with the financial support of the European Union, the Transition Program of the Czech Republic, the Global Greengrants Fund and the Heinrich-Böll Foundation.

"The environmental damage caused by SHPP is paid by electricity consumers through a renewable energy charge on their electricity bills. It is water that is exploited in our country through the construction of SHPP, while the great potentials of sun and wind are completely unused. The Republika Srpska Parliament even discontinued incentives for wind power plants in March last year, clearly favoring SHPP projects, "said Milos Orlic, Coordinator of the BiH River Protection Coalition.

The average monthly consumption of electricity in the Republika Srpska is about 350 kilowatt hours. This means that the monthly fee for RES is on average three convertible marks with VAT, which is 36 KM (18.5 euros) annually allocated by each household for RES - quotes from the Coalition for Protection of Rivers of BiH.

"The transparency of the RES incentive system is very controversial, because if citizens spend money, then they also have to wonder if and in what energy sources they want to invest their money. This is not the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although experts believe that investments in RES are very profitable and without public incentives, which was emphasized at the first energy summit (SET) held recently in Trebinje, "said Orlić.

"All countries face similar problems - inadequate enforcement of environmental legislation, water management and environmentally friendly flow, and disproportionate and non-transparent financial support compared to wind and solar. Therefore, a moratorium on the construction of all new SHPPs is necessary, "said Zuzana Vachunova from Arnika.

Traditional activities organized by Coalition members for World River Day are being postponed this year to limit the potential exposure of COVID-19 activists and citizens to the virus.

The Coalition says they will not give up their defense of the rivers, as well as the requirements that are clearly defined in the Declaration.

Source: energtika.ba