

The studies on the construction of hydropower plants in the Sutjeska and Hrcavka canyons were disputed. District Court in Banja Luka, ruled the second time in favor of the Center for the Environment.

The District Court in Banja Luka also annulled the Decision on approving the Study of the environmental impact of small hydropower plants planned in the canyon of the river Sutjeska in the National Park "Sutjeska" and so ruled in favor of the Center for the Environment. Before that, already in February, the Study for hydropower plants on the river Hrcavka has been canceled.

This also confirmed Natasha Crnkovic, from the Centre for the Environment, who pointed out that the main reasons for these judgments were in procedures disrespect related to the preparation of impact studies, mostly because the proceeding was conducted without the existing Spatial plan of NP "Sutjeska".

- In addition, the Center disputed the study in very argumentative way, referring to the large number of expert opinions and facts ignored in the proceedings. After the both Impact Studies were refuted on the court, we expect the Government to end the issue of hydropower plants in the NP "Sutjeska" by terminating a concession contract or assignment of spare locations to the investor - said Crnkovic.

From the Center say that generally is not questionable whether hydropower plants need to be built in the National Park "Sutjeska" or not. The only open question is how the government will solve this issue.

- We will not allow the hydropower plants in the canyons of the Sutjeska and Hrcavka. Many rivers and important natural areas have been already vulnerable, and if we allow the destruction of the National Park "Sutjeska", we also clearly put our future into question. We fight with knowledge and reason together with a large number of citizens who are willing to stand up decisively to the end in defense of this valuable space - says Crnkovic.

The "Battle for Sutjeska" has been launched in 2013<sup>th</sup> as response to plans for the construction of small hydropower plants in the National Park "Sutjeska". Investor "Drina Hydro Energy" from Ugljevik plans to build five small hydropower plants, two on the river Sutjeska and three on Hrcavka. The local population, environmental organizations, experts and the general public, as well as international institutions for the nature protection are sharply against to these plans.

Source; Serbia-energy.eu