

Bulgarian president vetoes a law that affects Pirin National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage

WWF and other environmental NGOs expressed support for the decision of the new Bulgarian President Rumen Radev to veto the recently adopted Concessions Act. Among the main environmental sites that could have been affected by the legal changes is Pirin National Park, a UNESCO's World Heritage. Last November, WWF launched a campaign urging the Bulgarian government to block the new management plan proposal for Pirin National Park, as it would allow for further construction and felling in the protected area. The Concessions Act was adopted in the final hours of the previous Bulgarian Parliament with a very small majority. President Radev said in statement that the law would pave the way to corruption and decisions which could harm the public interest. He added that such key legislation required a broad public debate.

Last Monday, environmental organizations protested the adoption of the new legislation in the streets of Sofia, saying that it gives almost unlimited rights to concession holders, among them a company which manages the largest ski zone in Pirin National Park. Politicians from smaller political parties and trade unions have also urged President Radev to veto the law.

Bulgaria's new caretaker government whose main task is to prepare the extraordinary elections in late March was appointed last week by the president. The minister of environment has the power to send back for revision the proposed 10-year management plan for Pirin National Park, as well as the plans for Rila National Park and Vitosha Nature Park. All three allow for more construction and forest felling.

source: wwf.panda.org