

This summer, the Federation Parliament adopted the Declaration on the Protection of Rivers and voted on a conclusion on a complete ban on the construction of small hydropower plants throughout the FBiH. Based on the Declaration, the FBiH Government was to analyze and propose amendments to the law within three months. Ten months after the ban was passed, and 6 months after the expiration of the first term, it seems that politicians – who do not hide that they are under pressure from lobbyists – are now changing their minds?

The situation with the construction of small hydropower plants in Bosnia and Herzegovina is becoming increasingly complicated. The House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) at its online session held on Tuesday (April 27th) did not accept the Draft Law on Electricity in the part related to the ban on construction of mini hydro power plants in the entire territory of that entity. Although MPs from almost all parties told reporters that they were still against the construction of such power plants, on the basis of which a ban on new construction was passed last summer, the law has not passed yet. Instead, it was returned as a draft to the regular procedure. As stated by bh. media, MPs refused to comment on the draft Law on Electricity by urgent procedure, so a new public debate lasting 30 days is opened for the discussion of the draft. The Federation Parliament is currently between a rock and a hard place. They are under fierce pressure from activists and environmentalists, mobilizing international anger over the destruction of rivers. They demand a complete ban on new power plants and the preservation of rivers. On the other hand, workers employed in industries that produce mechanics for the construction of power plants are organized. Namely, they protested on Monday, warning that the complete suspension of construction means dismissals for 3,500 people employed in this industry.

It is interesting that the private company Sendo from Sarajevo, which made a study on the impact on the environment for the HPP in Jajce on the river Pliva, sided with the investors, and many are worried about the destruction of the most beautiful BiH. a waterfall whose tributary is already visibly reduced by an existing power plant. The planned two new ones would further erode the existing ecological condition. Arguments for and against power plants are becoming increasingly polarized and going to extremes. While proponents of banning SHPPs point out that existing power plants in BiH produce only 3 percent of electricity, workers who protested on Monday point out that the power plants built so far produce the same amount of energy as the Kakanj thermal power plant, and that most investments in renewable energy in BiH go to solar and wind projects.

As for the ban on the construction of SHPPs, as the parties point out, everything is for the law, but not according to the urgent procedure. Why? Well probably due to the fact that in

this country, unlike neighboring found some model how to tie the energy transition to industry and job creation. The anger of environmentalists at politicians in this narrow context is therefore not entirely justified. Because just as politics has so far generally ignored ecology because of jobs and investors, so now ecologists ignore the fact that green transitions can only be considered successful if workers benefit from them. Despite the current anger of environmentalists, the fact is that it is necessary to find a balance between linking ecology with job creation. Only in this way can an attempt to remedy climate change succeed.

Source: bilten.org