

Croatia: Green NGO Orah warns Slovenia energy company HSE on the cross border environment impact of their HPPs Mokrice

ESPOO Convention, which was signed by Slovenia and Croatia, allows the participation of neighboring countries in the process of environmental impact assessment, if it considers that they can have consequences for the environment on the operations carried out by other countries.

NGO Orah is concerned about the inactivity of the Croatian environment ministry in protecting their interests in Mokrice on the Sava river.

In fact, Orah is concerned about possible negative effects on the environment downstream of the Sava river where the Slovenian HSE energy company is building a chain of hydroelectric power plants. Orah has set a request to the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection for inclusiveness in the process of building the Mokrice HPP in accordance with the ESPOO Convention.

ESPOO Convention, which was signed among others by Slovenia and Croatia, allows the participation of neighboring countries in the process of environmental impact assessment, if it considers that they can have consequences for the environment on the operations carried out by other countries. It is possible to modify or even stop the construction of an object if there are adverse environmental impacts that are manifested in the neighboring country.

Neven Voca, chairman of the Central Programming Forum Orah, says: "Our Ministry told us how they got involved only in the process of strategic cross-border impact of the National Spatial Plan of the Republic of Slovenia during 2013. It would be commendable if that were not under the jurisdiction of quite another of our ministry and the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning. However, the process of environmental impact assessment, which certainly falls under the competence - and the obligation - of the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry is not included but is waiting for notification of the Republic of Slovenia for cross-border consultations in the process of environmental impact assessment. So, it missed a step when legally able to work at the very beginning of the project and reduce the negative environmental impacts downstream of the Sava and on Croatian territory. Instead of taking care of the possible adverse impacts on flora and fauna and groundwater downstream of the planned HPP Mokrice, the Croatian Ministry is wasting time on things that are in them completely out of their spring action. What has also failed to do is to define and identify all the stakeholders in the process of access to information and to establish a visible public consent to all decisions which are made in these cases. These decisions must include ecosystems, social and health issues, while avoiding negative impacts must be a priority, which is unfortunately omitted to do again. It is clear that this is again an indifference of our line ministry for the environment, it is evident that there is no time for things that can be a concern to all residents who are located downstream from the HPP Mokrice, and most of the

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Zagreb County, including the City of Zagreb.

The environmental organizations have warned that the construction of HPP Mokrice could lead to changes in the groundwater regime and that will certainly affect the biodiversity of the Sava river and hope that Croatia will be actively involved in the evolution of such interventions on our environment .As this is not the only case in which our line ministry does not take care of the activities carried out by our neighboring countries we will follow this case and look at the purpose of transparency of the proceedings conducted by Slovenia to review all actions taken by the Croatian Government through the relevant ministries during the construction of the HPP Mokrice. So we will be able to transparently inform citizens that related with the Sava River County on the possible consequences of the construction of HPP Mokrice, and other HPP that our neighbors built along the Sava River Basin.