

After a five years long campaign, Eko-svest, Front 21/42 and CEE Bankwatch Network welcome the cancellation of a EUR 65 million loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development intended for the Boškov Most hydropower project in Macedonia. As a result this controversial project is now highly unlikely to be realised. In a statement posted last week on the EBRD's website, the bank said that the loan agreement had been valid for five years but "conditions for disbursement were not met." Ever since plans for the Boškov Most hydropower project emerged, Macedonian and international environmental groups have repeatedly warned of the detrimental ramifications this 68 MW hydropower dam inside the Mavrovo National Park could have for the fragile ecosystem and unique wildlife.

In particular, the project could severely threaten the already critically endangered Balkan lynx as well as several aquatic ecosystems and their species. In December 2015, the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, the European wildlife treaty, called on the Macedonian government to suspend its plans for establishing the Boškov Most and Lukovo Pole hydropower projects until the potential cumulative environmental impacts of these projects, as well as 19 other smaller hydropower projects across the Mavrovo National Park are fully assessed. Shortly after this resolution was issued, the World Bank decided to withdraw its support to the Lukovo Pole project.

source: bankwatch.org