

Environmental organizations sued Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bern Convention to protect the Neretva River

In order to protect the upper Neretva from the builders of small hydropower plants that crossed the line, the Center for the Environment and four other environmental organizations and networks from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Europe sued Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Berne Convention Secretariat, which protects wild habitats in Europe.

- The planned projects in this area are the 35 MW Ulog hydropower plant and the system of seven smaller hydropower plants that make up the Gornja Neretva hydropower system.

These hydro power plants will turn most of the upper part of the river, on a section of about 30 kilometers, into a series of dams, pipes and reservoirs that continue on top of each other - it is stated in the announcement.

According to environmentalists, the complaint to this Secretariat followed a complaint submitted by this group of organizations to the Secretariat of the Energy Community, highlighting serious shortcomings in the licensing procedures for small power plants in the upper Neretva.

- Environmental impact assessments made for these projects have identified several significant species present near the location of hydropower plants, but it is still concluded that the projects can be implemented. Although the area has been inadequately explored, it is known that rare species of animals are present, including bears, wolves, otters and crabs, as well as a certain species of trout - environmentalists claim.

In May, the Center for the Environment initiated an administrative dispute against the decision of the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and Ecology of the Republic of Srpska due to the decision that the first phase of the HES Gornja Neretva project does not require an environmental impact assessment.

- The decision was made despite the fact that the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage expressed opposition to the planned project of the Upper Neretva and emphasized that hydroelectric power plants will have a huge impact on rare, endemic and relict species - the statement reads.

Source: srpskainfo.com