

The project of the Komarnica hydroelectric power plant was stopped after environmental organizations from Montenegro filed a complaint with the Secretariat of the Bern Convention in order to preserve biodiversity. The Montenegrin government has approved a concession to the Electric Power Industry of Montenegro for the construction of the Komarnica hydroelectric power plant, but that will have to wait for the epilogue of the latest dispute.

The Montenegrin Society of Ecologists (CDE), together with the Society of Young Ecologists Nikšić and the Organization KOD, filed a complaint with the Secretariat of the Bern Convention regarding the decision of the Government of Montenegro to approve the EPCG concession for Komarnica hydropower plant. Also, the CDE, together with local activists, is calling for a protest rally in the Komarnica region from April 30th to May 3rd.

By adopting the concession decision, Montenegro violated Articles 3 and 4 of the Berne Convention, which obliges signatories to improve national policies in the conservation of wild flora and fauna, as well as recommendations related to the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats, the Montenegrin said. environmentalists.

At the end of the summer of 2020, the Government of Montenegro granted EPCG a concession for 60 years. According to projections at the time, project costs were between 260m and 290m euros.

Annual production would amount to 213 GWh according to previous announcements, while the entire project at Komarnica would be financed by EPCG, with a 51 percent share, and Elektroprivreda Srbije, with 49 percent.

The construction of a 172 MW hydroelectric power plant, with a 171-meter-high dam and a 17.6-kilometer-long reservoir, would cause a number of harmful effects on protected habitats and species that would be irretrievably lost, the CDE said.

The complaint against the Komarnica HPP project has been accepted as valid and environmental organizations now expect the Berne Convention Secretariat to send a group of independent experts to the site to assess the situation.

### **Economic development versus biodiversity conservation**

The authors of the study for environmental impact assessment state that in this case, economic development is not in line with the preservation of biodiversity, according to the CDE and claim that other relevant assessments were not performed in accordance with Montenegrin laws.

The environmental organization asks why EPCG has not yet shown the basic documentation and says that the company has not submitted a contract or a preliminary design for the hydroelectric power plant, reports Vijesti.

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention will forward the complaint to the competent institutions of Montenegro, which have until September 15 to respond to claims that the construction of HPP Komarnica would completely destroy flora and fauna and their habitats, says Andrijana Mićanović from CDE.

Komarnica is categorized as a natural monument and nature park, the Emerald area has been nominated, and parts of the course of this river should be declared Natura 2000 areas.

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