

On the occasion of September 20, when the idea of declaring Montenegro as “eco state” was confirmed on paper in Žabljak in 1991, the interlocutors of “Vijesti” say that 29 years later, the story of the environmental state remained just an idea. The aluminum plant in Podgorica, the Ironworks in Nikšić, the Shipyard in Bijela, the Thermal Power Plant and the Coal Mine in Pljevlja are environmental problems that the 30-year-old government left as a legacy to the new opposition party, which has yet to form after winning the August 30 elections. Interlocutors from the coalition “For the Future of Montenegro”, the Civic Movement URA and Democratic Montenegro agree that it will be harder than in 1991. As one of the most important goals, they state compliance with regulations, and as a priority - a further ban on the construction of small hydropower plants.

The eco state project was first presented in 1990

Three months before the adoption of the Declaration, in June 1991, Momir Bulatović, Milo Đukanović and Svetozar Marović transformed the then League of Communists into the DPS. Although for three decades he has only been an observer of the development of the idea he is the bearer of, Professor Dragan Hajduković still does not leave the enthusiasm that it can be really realized.

“The project of the eco state is a development project, which, if the world would believe in the seriousness of the intention to become ecological, can bring us everything that Montenegro lacks for rebirth - world publicity, knowledge and capital. No other project can bring us such a fast and great world recognition, reputation, charm and sympathy and provide great help in knowledge, donations and socially responsible capital (the most humane part of world capital).

Ecotourism paradise

As an example of projects that should be realized, he cites the “ecotourism paradise” Skadar Lake. “And not only Skadar, for the growing number of tourists who are allergic to civilization and 5-star hotels,” he added.

Hajduković sees the possibility of promoting such a Montenegro in “numerous, selected contacts”, which “can awaken enthusiasm and provide support for a large number of the most successful and most famous people in the world”.

What has the state done so far

MORT said that for the past 29 years, about 13.6 percent of the territory of Montenegro is protected, that the largest part (7.7%) consists of five national parks, that six nature parks

have been established - Piva, Dragišnica and Komarnica, Orjen, Rijeka Zeta, Komovi and Ulcinjska solana. Protests against the construction of SHPPs are underway in the part of the Komovi Park. The saltworks in Ulcinj became construction land thanks to the votes of the DPS. The saltworks in Ulcinj is one of the Ramsar areas, next to the Skadar Lake National Park and the Tivat Salt Reserve. MORT stated that the Durmitor National Park and the Tara River Basin are under UNESCO protection. Tara is the subject of a part of the European Parliament's report from 2018, when they emphasized the need "to stop all waste disposal activities and change the riverbed and provide the general public with timely and accurate information on the effects of highway construction on the river."

UNESCO warned earlier that "the consequences of the construction of the highway to the river will remain visible, despite the remediation plan". MORT also reminded of mapping for the purpose of establishing a Natura 2000 ecological network. It was never answered how it happened that a part of the forest below Zeletin, the mountain between Andrijevica and Gusinje, as an Emerald zone and potentially a Natura area, was the subject of a concession at all and that legal felling was allowed in that zone.

In connection with the remediation of "black ecological points", the Ministry of Transport and Communications announced that works are underway on cleaning the location of the Shipyard, and the ash and slag landfill "Maljevac" and the flotation tailings Gradac in Pljevlja. "While the preparation of technical documentation for the rehabilitation of the KAP site (solid waste landfill and red sludge pools) is in an advanced stage."

Laws on paper, in practice without much concrete results

Speaking about the past 29 years, the coalition "For the Future of Montenegro" says that "not much has progressed", and that the only move is "complete solution to the problem of tailings in Mojkovac". They said that it is necessary to urgently solve the problem of waste management, wastewater... "This must be approached systematically, which requires a lot of financial resources, but fortunately, EU funds are available. The solution to that problem must begin immediately. " As they add, the construction of SHPPs must be stopped, "because they bring benefit only to the owners and no one else", order must be introduced in forestry.

In May 2017, Montenegro introduced a temporary and partial ban on the export of wood raw materials. The measure came after Albania introduced a 10-year ban on logging in the same year, and similar bans existed in BiH and Kosovo. The coalition headed by Zdravko Krivokapić adds that "strict application of the existing legislation and penal policy" must be ensured, and even that sanctions in the field of environmental protection must be tightened.

They also said that it is necessary to clearly define competencies, and that the principle of “polluter pays” must be “scripture”.

The “polluter pays” principle refers to the payment of a fee for the protection and improvement of the environment. Based on that environmental compensation, Elektroprivreda, Rudnik uglja and Gradira Montenegro recently paid the first installment in the amount of one million euros to the account of the Municipality of Pljevlja. For a year, those three companies are required to pay a total of just over two million.

Accompanying Declaration on the Prohibition of SHPPs

The GP URA party, whose leader is Dritan Abazović, also said that the result of the Declaration from 1991 is today an ecological state only on paper. GP URA became a member of the Greens of Europe in mid-June. As a green party, GP URA says that further destruction of nature must be stopped.

“One of the most significant problems in this area are the problems that arise due to the construction of HME. The Black and White Coalition has prepared a Declaration banning the further construction of SHPPs, which was signed by more than 5,000 people. And that will be one of the first documents that we will propose to the Assembly,” Jokić said.

The goal is a system where laws apply and a small system as part of a global solution

Aleksa Bečić’s Democratic Montenegro also believes that ecology was not a priority for the outgoing government. As a priority for the future, they state the establishment of a system “governed by laws and rules”. Today, Hajduković places the idea of ecological Montenegro in the context of the general state of the environment on Earth.

On the 29th anniversary of the proclamation of Montenegro as an eco state, two environmental protests were organized. In the town of Bare Kraljske, in the Nature Park “Komovi”, the locals gathered for the construction of SHPPs on the rivers Crnja, Ljubastica and Cestogaz. There is a protest in Murin because of the felling of “the highest quality forest in the area of the Plav municipality”, which, as they claim, is happening without the consent of the forest administration in Plav. And these are not the first protests in those places, nor the first due to the attitude of the institutions towards the environment. Also actions of cleaning the shores were organized at 12 locations. Participants collected about 800 bags of waste.

MORT: Reconstruction of the Thermal Power Plant is the most significant

environmental endeavor

MORT said that in the field of waste management, activities are underway on the implementation of projects for the construction of recycling yards and transfer stations in several Montenegrin municipalities, and a new waste management center in the municipality of Bijelo Polje.

They also said that the environmental reconstruction of TPP “Pljevlja” “represents the most significant environmental endeavor”, reminded that the Eco Fund has started working, that Montenegro has ratified the Paris Agreement in the field of climate change, and in December 2018 opened Chapter 27 - Environment and climate change, reports Vijesti.

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