

WWF launched a campaign to preserve the last world's free-flowing rivers. The campaign aims to mobilize people all over the world to jointly fight against the construction of dams, protect wildlife and local communities along our best preserved rivers. WWF International has identified the Mura River as one of the most pressing problems currently in Europe as it is threatened by the construction of hydropower plants that would endanger the extraordinary natural wealth of the Slovenian Mura and the wider region of the Amazon of Europe.

Free-flowing rivers are the freshwater equivalent of land-based protected areas. They provide an important living space for many animals and support the survival of people and nature around the world. A scientific study by WWF found that only a third of the 177 longest rivers in the world (more than 1000 km long) are in free-flowing state, with no dams or other obstacles. WWF will soon publish a comprehensive and scientifically substantiated report on the status of worldwide free-flowing rivers.

"We hope in WWF that we can preserve or even increase the number of free flowing rivers that are under extreme pressure around the world. Rivers are our life arteries, the circulatory system of the planet, which transmits nutrients and water and allows the migration of animals. Only by common forces will we be able to stop the construction of damaging dams that would destroy local communities and wildlife. We need to strengthen the laws that successfully protect the rivers and encourage local leaders to use all available data for better decisions on the ground. This is especially true for Mura. Keeping the Mura in Slovenia free of dams will be a benchmark as we as a society are able to preserve our last remaining free flowing rivers on our continent for future generations and not sacrifice them for short term economic benefits. WWF will therefore do everything possible to help to stop hydropowerplants on river Mura," said Bojan Stojanović from WWF Adria.

The Mura River in Slovenia is the first case study of the WWF global campaign, because the process is already in the final stages and is already considering the use of the instrument of overriding public interest in order to build a series of hydropower plants.

"Since Mura is part of a wider area of the future cross-border UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of the Mura-Drava-Danube, a 700 km long green belt of the best preserved river basin in Europe, this is not only a question of Slovenia, but of all five countries sharing the Amazon of Europe," added Stojanović.

WWF US also put a petition on their website, which they want to hand over to the representative of Slovenia at the World Water Forum in Brazil on the World Water Day.

Source: wwf.panda.org