

More than 400 SHPPs are planned in BiH, of which about a hundred have been built, which for most of the year leave the riverbeds almost completely dry. During the decision-making on the construction of SHPPs in BiH, the public is not adequately involved, citizens are deprived of information and the right to speak in a democratic way about these projects. The constructed SHPPs have caused great damage to nature and local communities, and those who gave their consent and permits for the construction of these projects, which are harmful to nature and society, should be responsible for that.

Recently the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the Declaration on River Protection, which, among other things, represents a great success of activists gathered in the Coalition for the River Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina who defended rivers and pointed out the harmfulness of small hydropower plants.

“Although we are not completely satisfied with the final text of the Declaration, we welcome the adoption of the Declaration with amendments, because they represent the first step towards the protection of our rivers. The next step is on the Government of the Republika Srpska and changing the legislation in the field of renewable energy sources. The basis of the new law should be the abolition of incentives for all new projects in the field of renewable energy sources (RES) and turning to encouraging civil energy where citizens who pay a fee for RES could be investors, which is already the practice in neighboring Croatia,” said Viktor Bjelic, vice president of the Center for the Environment.

The Declaration on River Protection and the conclusion on a complete ban on the construction of small hydropower plants in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina were voted in June in the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but to date federal and cantonal regulations have not been harmonized.

“We hope that the RS Government will take more vigorous steps to protect rivers and that this process will proceed faster in both entities, and that we will ultimately have a legal framework at the state level that protects our rivers and citizens from harmful projects,” said Dragana Skenderija, coordinator of the Coalition for the Protection of Rivers in BiH. The declaration adopted by the RS National Assembly and the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament is based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Declaration on the Protection of Rivers of the Western Balkans, which emerged as a reaction of environmental associations to huge damage to local communities and the environment caused by small hydropower plants. It was adopted in November 2019 at an international conference organized by Center for the Environment, which was attended by 75 representatives of non-governmental organizations, institutions and experts from BiH and throughout Europe.



Republika Srpska adopted Declaration on River Protection

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