

Residents of Kruščice in BiH say they will not allow the construction of a small hydro-power plant

Residents of Kruščice, near Vitez, announced that they are ready for new protests, after the investors announced that they would not give up the construction of a small hydro-power plant on the river Kruščica.

Organized by the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction, Environmental Protection, Return and Housing of the Central Bosnia County (SBŽ), a discussion was held in Travnik on the issuance of an environmental permit for the Kruščica 1 mini hydropower plant, whose investor is Genaa d.o.o. from Vitez.

The president of the local community of Kruščica, Tahira Tibold, reminded that in previous years, concessions were granted for the construction of two mini hydroelectric power plants on the river Kruščica, which is why the locals, in addition to protests in 2017 and 2018, began the legal process.

“They are now starting all over again, because the court annulled their urban, construction and environmental permits. They don’t give up and move on, but neither do we and we won’t let them pass. “Water is our life, and they take it,” Tibold told reporters.

The director of Genaa d.o.o. Vitez, Adisa Balić confirmed to the journalists that this company is not giving up on the construction of a small hydro-power plant on the river Kruščica, emphasizing that it will not harm the environment.

“We have no other option, because we have already paid an advance to the contractor and we are suffering huge losses due to delays. There will be no damage to the environment and this is shown by numerous studies, and I also asked the representatives of the locals which energy sources are environmentally acceptable to them, if not those from renewable energy sources, “said Balić.

The outcome of the discussion in Travnik, a group of Kruščica residents was waiting in front of the building of the relevant County Ministry, while they were represented at the meeting by a lawyer, as well as experts and representatives of environmental associations.

Assessing that small hydro-power plants are a recipe for destroying the environment, the president of the Association of Eco Actions from Sarajevo, Anes Podić, told reporters that the question arises as to why public debates are avoided, which are a legal obligation.

“This was the only example where an oral hearing is held, without inviting women from Kruščica, but their lawyer who had the right to delegate two experts. This canton seems to be trying to evade legal provisions and the Convention that the public must be involved from the early stages of the proceedings. There is no such thing here and the excuse is the corona virus, and I was the only one in that room who wore a mask, “said Podić.

According to the Coalition for River Protection, which brings together several environmental organizations, 106 small hydropower plants have been built in BiH so far, while an



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additional 340 are planned.

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