

According to the Uzice association "Libergraf", they came to the proof that JP "Elektroprivreda Srbije" violated the regulations and reconstructed the old hydroelectric power plant in Cetinje and almost irreversibly damaged the appearance of one of the most important symbols of this city.

"Based on the Law on Access to Information of Public Importance, we received confirmation from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Kraljevo that EPS did not obtain approval for the project and documentation for the reconstruction and revitalization of the old hydroelectric power plant in Cetinje." Therefore, the building permit issued by the City is not legal. With this, the first European hydroelectric power plant that functioned according to Tesla's principles permanently changed its appearance. The symbol of the social and technological development of Uzice and Serbia has become a victim of the irresponsible attitude of the state towards cultural heritage. Our goal is to annul this illegal building permit ", says Vladan Sindić from "Libergraf ", whose activities were supported by Crta through the initiative "Citizens have power ".

### **For a handful of dinars and euros**

The hydroelectric power plant on the Cetinje River was built in 1900, just five years after it was opened on the Niagara River. It worked until the seventies of the last century, when due to the construction of the Belgrade-Bar railway, the water supply channel was buried, so that in 2000 it was completely renovated and started producing electricity again.

According to Sindić, EPS started the revitalization of old hydroelectric power plants in Serbia, and no one would mind if it remained as it was. However, in 2018, the appearance of the hydroelectric power plant on Ćetinja and its surroundings began, which, together with the old Užice fortress, forms one ambient whole. Sindić explains how EPS tried to avoid the procedure:

"EPS received conditions from the Institute for the Protection of Monuments for the development of an urban project. When the investor, based on the conditions, makes an urban project, he should obtain the consent of the Bureau for him. So, first the consent for the project should be obtained, and only then the construction permit, and EPS received only the conditions, not the consent. What we have come to is that EPS never applied to the Bureau for approval for the project, but at one point addressed them by sending them a project for a building permit and asking for approval. The Institute then issued them an opinion, ie a notification, a kind of instruction that they were obliged by law to obtain consent for the preliminary design, and not for the project for the construction permit. EPS used that moment and that notification, I emphasize the consent, which it received from the

Institute, handed over to the City and started obtaining a building permit from the City Administration for Urbanism. Then, the City Administration used that notification as if it had given its consent, and based on that, it issued a construction permit to EPS for the reconstruction of the hydroelectric power plant in Cetinje. ”

Sindjic adds that the City of Uzice also did not follow the legal procedures.

“The hydroelectric power plant building itself was added in accordance with the entire facility. However, the outlet enters the riverbed five meters. There is an embankment that threatened the watercourse, there is no waterfall next to the building. Also, the City of Uzice did not comply with the requirements of the Law on Waters because it was obliged to submit a project for a building permit and the construction permit itself to the company “Srbijavode” within two weeks after issuing the construction permit, in order for “Srbijavode” to see if the project conditions and issued an opinion on that basis. And they skipped that step. ”

Libergraf also says that it is not clear to them why everything had to be done like this, why another generator had to be added and the capacity for electricity production increased.

“The hydroelectric power plant was renovated in 2000. It worked properly and produced electricity on those old generators, just like in 1900. EPS received compensation as a privileged producer, but all this does not significantly increase the production from which EPS will receive significant money. It comes down to the fact that everything was done for a handful of euros “, says Sindjic.

### **If the state does not react**

“We have two demands. One according to the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments from Kraljevo, where they should act according to the Law on Cultural Heritage and ask for a return to the previous state, because the law obliges them to do so. On the other hand, we also addressed the Ministry of Construction with a request to annul the construction permit because it was issued without the prior consent of the Bureau. Now the state is on the move and we are waiting to see what it will do. If the authorities do not act according to the law, we have complete documentation and we will go to the Administrative Court “, says Sindjic. If another city in the world had the “Old Power Plant”, as it has in Uzice, I would keep it because of pride - pride that you are the second city in the world, the first in Europe, where a hydroelectric power plant was built, for many, and the largest the work of Nikola Tesla, whose origin we are selflessly proud of. This is not the case in Uzice for now, but some citizens want to change that.

Source: crta.rs

## Serbian citizens can impact hydroenergy projects