

Despite the protests of numerous organizations and professional associations that the construction of the cable car route on Kalemegdan would damage or destroy parts of the cultural heritage of the Belgrade Fortress, the first construction activities took place in March 2019. As part of the preparatory works, the first trees were cut down at the fortress and in the Ušće park, at the places where the gondola passenger reception stations should be located.

The organization RERI (Regulatory Institute for Renewable Energy and Environment), whose work within the initiative "Citizens have power" was supported by Crta, filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court. RERI stated in the lawsuit that the Ministry of Construction, Traffic and Infrastructure did not issue a permit for preparatory works according to the law, and they are asking for the annulment of that construction permit. The Administrative Court in Belgrade passed a decision on the temporary suspension of works on the construction of the cable car route on Kalemegdan until the final decision on the lawsuit filed by RERI.

One man or the institutions

The speech of the advisor to the president, and then the deputy mayor of Belgrade, who also stated that the gondola will be built, is nothing but pressure on the court for Jovan Rajić from RERI.

"Especially the statement of Suzana Vasiljevic. "We have asked a public question whether this means that neither the court nor a final court decision can prevent the president from realizing his intention," Rajic told Crta.

Rajic also states that it is especially problematic that neither according to the Constitution nor the law, the president has any authority to be involved in any way in the construction of the cable car, and that all the papers are in order.

Also, he is not surprised that the statements about the Belgrade gondola are coming at this very moment:

"I am now asking, if they did not know that the hearing was scheduled, why no one gave statements on this topic for a year and a half. And now we have the highest state and city officials who have in vain activated themselves and are constantly making statements regarding the construction of the cable car. "

In the meantime, in May last year, this project put Belgrade Fortress on the list of "Seven Most Endangered Monuments of Europe", which put it on the most referenced list of endangered cultural monuments supported by the European Union through the Creative Europe program. As Mirko Popović from RERI states in an interview for Crta, we found

ourselves in an absurd situation to rejoice that the symbol of the capital was on a list like this.

“We hope that the signal coming from the EU could be a sobering factor to give up.” But having in mind the way in which Vesić speaks about people who argued and criticized the gondola, it seems to me that it means nothing to them. Putting the Belgrade Fortress on that list is a signal that its further destruction could jeopardize its inclusion on the UNESCO list, which, at least declaratively, the government is advocating. ”

It is estimated that the construction of the gondola would cost around 1.8 billion dinars, and the funds would be allocated by the City of Belgrade and the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications. The fact that the budget of the City of Belgrade for 2021 does not plan funds for this purpose, is not a sign for Popović to give up the gondola, because rebalances of the city budget are not a rarity.

RERI states that they are proud that, at least temporarily, they stopped the project that they believe is wrong.

“I have no dilemma that we did the right thing. But the feeling that we are winners and any pleasant feeling that could be related to the fact that we are on the right side is obscured by the fact that we are in a captive state “, says Popović.

Jovan Rajić states that all the absurdity of the society in which we live is shown by the fact that individuals unite in order to protect the public interest from their own state.

“The state stands on the side of polluters, usurpers, all those who destroy that public good and in fact stands against its people. That is what is disastrous, “says Rajic.

“This is our country. This is our Kalemegdan. This is our state. It is our duty to protect the public interest and we do not have the right to see how much power is on the opposite side, but how much value we are defending “, concludes Mirko Popović.

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