

In the area of the Dinara Nature Park is the highest peak of the Republic of Croatia – Sinjal (1831 m). The Park area is of special interest to the Republic of Croatia due to the preservation of original natural values, rich geodiversity, wild flora and fauna, endemics and the overall diversity of natural habitats such as: aquatic habitats of Krčić and Cetina with tributaries, wetlands, rocks and rivers, forest and cave habitats.

On February 5, 2021, the Croatian Parliament passed the Law on the Proclamation of the Dinara Nature Park, which gave the country its 12th nature park. Since the Dinara extends through Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as through Croatia, this law applies only to the southern side of the mountain range, the one located in Croatia. Areas of the Dinara, Troglav and Kamešnica massifs are protected, as well as the source and upper course of the Cetina River and karst fields (Hrvatačko, Paško and Vrličko) along the Cetina.

Although it is certainly a valuable and commendable act, especially if we remember only a few years old attempt of the current minister to research and dig fossil fuels in this area, it is worth mentioning that there is room for concern about the pockets of areas outside the park. nature, but are protected through an “ecological network”. According to the Nature Protection Act, it is “a system of interconnected or spatially close ecologically significant areas, which with a balanced biogeographical distribution significantly contribute to the preservation of natural balance and biodiversity.” As a rule, this refers to areas covered by Natura 2000, which are protected by European directives (on birds and habitats). However, the law on nature protection leaves the possibility that the areas covered by ecological networks are also located within strict reserves, national parks and even nature parks. All the more so because both are managed by public institutions.

Furthermore, as stated in the document entitled Expert basis for the protection of the Dinara: “Within the proposed area of the Dinara Nature Park, in whole or in part, there are a total of 11 areas of the Croatian ecological network (Natura 2000 network)”, and yet only a few are left beyond borders. As the Biom Association noted in the public consultation, “it is commendable that Vrličko polje is included in the Park and thus covers another area of the ecological network. However, the area east of Vrličko polje, where the canyon part of the Cetina is upstream from Lake Peruća to the Balek bridge, was left out and a ‘pocket’ was formed. After the construction of the reservoirs on the Cetina, it remained the only original canyon of the Cetina and it is necessary to protect it and thus make the boundaries of the Park more compact. ” This is not the only pocket, but the areas of the plateau (Poda) above the settlements of Rumin and Bajagić / Obrovac Sinjski have been thrown out of the Park area. It is unclear why such two pockets would form within the boundaries of the Park, especially since such boundaries are inconsistent with the ecological network area.

**Intended purposes**

In response to the association for Bajagić / Obrovac Sinjski, the Ministry says only that the spatial plan envisages a different purpose, and for other pockets it is answered that the areas are already protected by the ecological network, ie at the European Union level, within the Natura 2000 program and regulations on birds and habitats. Such regulations restrict forms of economic activity in protected areas, but they do not have the force of law. Moreover, that we have the right to doubt the intentions of the ministry towards the Dinara is evidenced by previous similar examples of degradation of protected areas, but also manipulation of nature protection. For example, until only a few years ago, nothing was allowed to be built in national parks in Croatia, so the law was changed due to the tourist potential of Plitvice. Volatility in those few years led to the pollution of that travertine pearl by sewage and apartmentisation. An even more radical case is the only Croatian European rainforest (like Durmitor) - Štirovača. One half of this forest has been marked as a strict reserve for years while the other half has been exploited for the timber industry. The media have been unsuccessfully trying to write about manipulations, thefts and the astonishing degradation of nature, both because of legal and illegal logging and because of bark beetles. The pockets in the Dinara Nature Park leave room for doubt in the further intentions of excessive economic exploitation of protected parts of nature.

Source: bulletin.org