

BIRD PROTECTION CENTRE ASSESSED

Government careless about the Cijevna

Contradictory responses and the unknown as to what Albania is planning on the Cijevna should be enough of a reason for the Montenegrin institutions to launch an initiative for engaging in the process of transboundary environmental impact, in accordance with the ESPOO Convention, concluded the Centre for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP).

CZIP Project Manager **Ksenija Medenica** said that the Montenegrin citizens had been unpleasantly surprised by the news that the Cijevna, in its upper course through Albania, had been dramatically devastated by the construction of small hydro power plants (SHPPs). She reminds that one SHPP is being built in Albania, on the Cijevna, with unofficial information indicating that the total of 14 SHPPs are planned to be constructed.

Medenica assessed that the responses of competent institutions from the neighbouring Albania are vague and contradictory. She explained that the information from some sources implied that SHPPs had not been granted necessary permits, but that, on the other hand, the Montenegrin public had been told that there were no cross-border impacts and thus no need to involve our public.

-The contradictory responses and the huge unknown as to what exactly the state of Albania plans on this river, should be enough of a reason for our institutions to launch an initiative for engaging in the process of transboundary environmental impact, pursuant to the ESPOO Convention signed by both Montenegro and Albania – said Medenica.

As she underlined, it is clear that the signatory states cannot agree upon whether there could be significant adverse transboundary consequences, and it is expected that Montenegro forwards the matter to an inquiry commission which is being formed in such cases to organize a public debate and acknowledge to which degree the projects will impact the environment.

Medenica reminds that the Cijevna canyon is an Emerald habitat, and thus one of the candidates for future Natura 2000 protected area, and that it has been declared a natural monument in Montenegro. She is particularly concerned with the fact that even one month after finding out that the Cijevna is being devastated in its upper course, competent Montenegrin institutions have done nothing to preserve the river which is protected both at the national and international level. **A.O.**