

Citizens are not consulted when “raping” nature

Head of the Regional Office for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Deni Porej, said that it is not surprising that the Albanian authorities did not inform Montenegrin officials concerning the construction of small hydro power plants on their part of the Cijevna River

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It is not surprising that Albania has not officially informed Montenegro regarding plans for the construction of small hydro power plants on the Cijevna, the river that flows through both countries and whose exploitation of resources is subject to international agreements, said Deni Porej, Head of the Regional Office of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF Adria).

Albania, he said to "Vijesti", has treated Montenegro as same as that Montenegro, as well as other Balkan countries, treats its citizens - ignorant.

The Albanian government has approved the construction of several small hydro power plants on the Cijevna, on its territory. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism (MSDT) informed "Vijesti" that Montenegrin colleagues have not been announced about this. Photographs delivered to the editorial office, recorded mid last week, testify that the works on the Cijevna are ongoing. Built facility on the river and the pipes laid in the river bank can be seen on those photos.

Porej points out that such projects, particularly in countries such as the Balkan, are not "naive", and that their construction is "insolence and rape of citizens and nature", and that only politicians and investors benefit from them. He notes that small hydro power plants are constructed completely haphazardly, without analyzing the impact on the environment and human life, and that they are carried out behind closed doors - without consultation with local communities.

"This has happened to you. Albania has not informed Montenegro about the construction of small hydro power plants. Why should they have done it, when the Montenegrins do not inform Montenegrins about what they do on their rivers", he said.

According to the sources of "Vijesti" in Albania, the local residents of Keljmendi, where the construction of several small hydro power plants on the Cijevna is planned - even 14, have not been informed about that. Regarding construction of small hydro power plants on the Cijevna, pursuant to the ESPOO convention, whose signatories are Albania and Montenegro, citizens of both countries should be consulted.

"Mostly, the local community finds out that something happens only when machines appear on the site", says Porej.

Leka Dedić, whose family is from Stjepovo, in Zatrijepče, from where one can see the most beautiful landscape of the Cijevna canyon, says that the whole case could have been "an example of good cooperation and common interest of neighbors sharing a fabulous natural beauty".

"Unfortunately, it has not happened... The neighbors from Albania have done what they have thought, without asking us anything ... Our ignorant institutions are throwing over hot potatoes. They want them to cool down, so that everything is forgotten", he says.

Head of WWF Adria reminds that the construction of small hydro power plants affects the environment from several aspects, and that investors are not controlled by anyone and they receive a guaranteed price for electricity generated in small hydro power plants, through state subsidies.

"There is no supervision in the countries of the region, and it is ridiculous how the inspection services and the authorities do their job", he says, adding that the state's attitude towards the community is best seen through projects of small hydro power plants.

Head of WWF Adria states that people like him are not opponents of development"... I know what the profession is and what insolence is. This situation is scandalous and it's just a matter of meeting the interests of individuals, politicians who do not care about voters, investors who do not care about nature and people, and all of this is served as something compulsory for the progress of the country ... This is a rape of the people and nature. In this case, enough is enough", he says.

It is unknown whether Montenegro received an official response from Albanian colleagues for the projects of small hydro power plants on the Cijevna in the meantime.

“Barbarians“: Unacceptable and unnecessary

The revolt due to plans in Albania was also expressed by the fans of "Budućnost", who during the basketball match against the "Red Star" spread the banner "We do not give the Cijevna". "It is unacceptable to us that the human factor, aware and without necessity and general benefits, affects the flow and life of the Cijevna. It represents the unique ecosystem and the summer escape from the heat for the majority of “Barbarians”. It is a tributary of the Morača, which is also mentioned in the title of our anthem 'Deep Morača'. The Cijevna River is a part of every resident of Podgorica and “Barbarians”, was told to “Vijesti” by the “Barbarians”.