

APPEAL of NGOs

Save Vjosa - Stop the dams



April 2019



Dear Prime Minister Edi Rama,

Hydropower developments at the Vjosa continue to be supported by the Albanian government despite all scientific findings confirming the conservation value of the unique eco-system of the Vjosa river. We are particularly concerned about the ongoing implementation process for the hydropower plant Kalivaç (HPP Kalivaç): the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study for the project is scheduled to be conducted within approximately three months – an unrealistic timespan to prepare a profound EIA for a project of such size.

The Albanian government supports the implementation of HPP Kalivaç, despite the fact that international institutions – amongst them the European Commission and the European Parliament – have been criticizing these developments repeatedly. The Recommendations of the Bern Convention to suspend HPP Kalivaç until the necessary strategic planning and additional assessments are carried out are not respected by the Albanian government either.

Including the above mentioned HPP Kalivac, we have evidence of 45 hydropower plants projected in the Albanian Vjosa catchment alone: 8 at the Vjosa main course and 37 at her tributaries.

The Vjosa River is one of Europe's last big free-flowing rivers without any artificial obstacles along her entire Albanian course of about 200 km. The river's intactness makes her a hotspot for many endangered European species and habitats. As such, the Vjosa is a natural heritage of pan-European importance, holding huge potentials for alternative sustainable developments like ecotourism.

We, the national and international environmental organizations, call on you, Prime Minister Edi Rama to immediately suspend all ongoing hydropower developments in the Vjosa catchment until a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and an integrated River Basin Management plan, which takes into account social aspects, particularly the potential of ecotourism, has been elaborated.