

World River News

Dear river lovers,

Welcome to the first Riverwatch Newsletter in English language! It covers news from the world of rivers as well as our activities since last October. More info can be found on our [brand new website](#)!

“Save the Blue Heart of Europe” campaign



VJOSA, ALBANIA



Albanian Court stops hydropower project on the Vjosa! Together with 38 affected residents, we [filed a lawsuit against the HPP project Poçëm](#) last December – the first ever environmental lawsuit in Albania. In early May, the Administrative Court decided in our favour: for the time being, the dam must not be constructed. However, the Albanian government has already appealed the decision. If necessary, we will take this all the way to the Supreme Court. [MORE](#)



Kalivac construction site: unfinished for 10 years © Roland Dorozhani

HPP Kalivaç revisited: For almost 10 years, the construction of the dam project Kalivaç has been halted, but now it shall be continued. The Albanian Ministry of Energy and Industry has cancelled the contract with the Italian Company Kalivaçi Green Energy only to open the procedures for re-issuing the concession shortly after. We are considering legal actions. [MORE](#)



Unusual press conference for an extraordinary river. © Jens Steingässer

Scientists for the Vjosa! The Vjosa lobby is getting bigger: in April, 25 scientists from 4 countries sampled the Vjosa in the area of the projected Poçem dam for a whole week. First results confirm the extraordinary biodiversity and complexity of this natural riverscape. In an [unusual press conference](#) on a gravel island in midst of the Vjosa they take position against the hydropower plan and demand further research. [MORE](#)

Previously, a group of scientist had already [strongly criticized the EIA of the HPP Poçem](#) in a letter to the Albanian Prime Minister.



The European Parliament demands the Vjosa's protection © Gregor Subic

European Parliament demands National Park for Vjosa and stop to hydropower projects! In the current Enlargement Report on Albania, the [EU has once more criticized Albania's hydropower policy](#) and also called for adjusting the quality of environmental assessments to EU standards. Vice President of the EU Parliament Ulrike Lunacek personally lobbies against the projected dams: "Don't destroy Vjosa!" she warns, as you can read [in this article](#).



Vjosa mayors united against dams! The local authorities also stand behind our cause. The mayors of the Vjosa valley raised their concerns about the projected dams in open letter to Prime Minister Edi Rama.... [MORE](#)

SAVA RIVER



White Book Sava – Threats and Restoration Potential! In February, we published a [comprehensive study about the Sava](#), not only depicting the ecological importance and threats of this unique river system but also providing concrete restoration suggestions. The study also features an [atlas](#) of 57 maps [MORE](#)



European Parliament discusses Sava River! The presentation of the Sava White Book in Brussels provided the opportunity to draw valuable attention to the river on EU level... [MORE](#)

MAVROVO NATIONAL PARK, MACEDONIA



Success: EBRD withdraws from funding a hydropower project in the Mavrovo National Park!
This is the second decision against damming in the park, since the World Bank has refused to finance Lukovo Pole project last year ... [MORE](#)

RIVERS IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



New key country in the campaign: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) still has many near-natural rivers, some of which hosting the endangered Huchen. Over 300 HPPs are projected throughout the country and the Center for Environment – our new campaign partner – together with the Coalition for the Protection of Rivers in BiH are working to prevent this exploitation. Watch this [video](#) (English subtitles can be switched on at the bottom right of the video)

Zločin nad rijekom Sanom



Kelag: environmental crime against Huchen River Sana! The Austrian-German Kelag company is constructing a hydropower plant on the Sana in BiH – in midst of a Huchen habitat, a highly endangered fish species particularly vulnerable to dams. Rivers with Huchen occurrences must be no-go areas for dam construction. Watch the [protest video](#)

BALKAN RIVERS IN GENERAL



When it comes to hydropower, small is not beautiful - it's nonsense!

© Center for Environment

Small is disastrous: the NGO BankWatch has looked into so-called small hydropower in the Balkans. Their report points out the devastating consequences for the environment and residents. [MORE](#)



Lake Skadar in Montenegro needs your help! © Green Home

Save Lake Skadar in Montenegro! Act now: please sign this petition from our Montenegrin colleagues at Green Home for the protection of the ecologically valuable Lake Skadar... [THANK YOU](#) (for description in English scroll down)



River Raul Alb in Romania saved! © Călin Dejeu

Raul Alb saved! Good news from Romania: after intense lobbying especially by Călin Dejeu and the Federation Nature 2000 Coalition Romania, the river Raul Alb was saved from hydropower development by a Court ruling. [MORE](#)



Balkan campaign in media! Here a selection: [Men's Journal](#), [European Union Foreign Affairs Journal](#) (pages 99-116), [Universum Magazin](#), [Der Standard](#), [FM4](#), [Huck Magazine](#), [TAZ](#)

New campaign: Remove the Dams!



„Remove the Dams – Free our Rives“ is our new campaign, which is currently in preparation. The joint initiative of Riverwatch and the Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung aims at the removal of old weirs and dams with a focus on the Alpine region and the Balkans. Time for these ailing and particularly harmful dams to be taken down! [MORE](#)



Anita Scharl coordinates the "Remove the Dams" campaign

New staff for the Dedamming campaign! Since February, Anita Scharl coordinates the „Remove the Dams“ campaign at Riverwatch. She has 10 years of experience in project management and in the water sector, and is highly motivated to implement the Dedamming campaign with us. [MORE](#)



Dam removal in Spain: Since 2015, the Duero River Basin Authority has taken down 115 river obstacles, reconnecting over 700 km of water courses. Watch this [VIDEO](#)

Altenaurenaturierung HRB Husen



Renaturierung der Altenau im Bereich des HRB Husen

Altenau: a valley gets its river back. The Altenau is a creek in Northrhine-Westfalia/Germany. In consequence of a flood, it was canalised and impounded since the 1970s. However, decades of dedication finally paid off: the Altenau is now being restored. Recently, another river section was given back to nature. [Watch this video](#)

Austrian Rivers



Mur: this is what green hydropower looks like. Lots of things have happened at the Mur in Graz/Austria: despite numerous protests, demanded referendum and a people committee, the construction of the highly controversial hydropower plant in Graz has started in February. Under police protection and against heavy protests [Mur trees have been clear-cut](#) – thousands by now. The project is also being fought in Court: the national Administrative Court is currently examining the contested expropriation of residents. In regards to the demanded referendum, the Court has recently ruled against the codetermination of the residents of Graz.

River News from around the world

theguardian



Globaler Trend: Murdered for defending nature! Life is dangerous if you stand up for nature protection these days! In 2016, 200 environmental activists have been killed globally, with a rising trend. What's worse, the killers usually get away with it. Read the [article in The Guardian](#)! The Guardian has launched a project to record these deaths: [the defenders tracker](#)



Preparation for the doom of Hasankeyf © Hasankeyf'i Yaşatma Girişimi

Ilisu: monument relocation in Hasankeyf. The Ilisu dam is [to 90% completed](#). Despite years of [opposition](#), the 600 year old [Zeynel Bey Tomb monument has been relocated](#). The Dutch [Bresser company has been sharply criticized](#) in this regard for implementing the relocation of the historic monument. European's leading heritage organisation [Europa Nostra has voiced strong criticism](#).

Videos



Thank you hydropower – if fish could scream. Reservoir flushing at the Mur in Graz. In the video you see what hydropower does to fish and river. !![Warning: this video contains disturbing images!!](#) (Sorry, in German only)



Soča at risk! Watch this short video by Uwe Koenzen about the impacts of hydropower based on Soča River. The clip shows the high protection value of the upper Soča as well as the damage due to hydropower use on the lower course. Sorry, in German only! ... [WATCH](#)



Trailer: Una- The One! The Una in Bosnia&Herzegovina – like so many other rivers in the Balkans – is in permanent danger of being destroyed by a series of hydropower projects. The Una is one of the last habitats for the endangered Huchen. [WATCH](#)



The Great Rzav is the cleanest river in Serbia. This film shows the beauty of this unspoiled river and discusses whether the construction of the dam is necessary as well as providing alternative solutions. English subtitles can be switched on at the bottom right of the video! ... [WATCH](#)

Best wishes,



Ulrich Eichelmann

Supported by our long-standing partner, the foundation
Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation
and Environmental Protection.



Copyright © 2017 RiverWatch,
all rights reserved.

Unsere Postadresse:
RiverWatch
Neustiftgasse 36
Wien 1070
info@riverwatch.eu
<http://riverwatch.eu/>