COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 27 September 2013 **T-PVS/Files (2013) 31**
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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

33rd meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2013

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Complaint in stand-by

Hydro power development within the territory of Mavrovo National Park ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia")

REPORT BY THE COMPLAINANT

Document prepared by
the Center for Environmental Research and Information "Eko-svest"

The Mavrovo National Park has been officially proclaimed as an Emerald Site in December 2012. It is expected that most of the area covered with the National park will become NATURA 2000 sites upon EU accession.

We are concerned that the massive infrastructure development within the territory of the Park (hydro power plants and supporting infrastructure) will cause irreversible damage to its flora and fauna.

We believe that "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" might violate Article 4, point 1 and 2, Article 5 and Article 6 of the Bern Convention.

Mavrovo National Park is located in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", latitude 41033'01" to 41052'39" and longitude 20031'02" to 20048'59", between the cities of Gostivar, Debar and Kicevo. Surface covered by this protected area is 72.417 ha.

The national park "Mavrovo" is one of the richest in biodiversity areas in the country. It is a home of 50 mammal species, including the wolf, brown bear, fox, wild cat and lynx, 129 bird species, 11 species of amphibians (out of total 15 species found on the territory of the entire country), 24 species of reptiles (out of 32 in the country) and 924 species of invertebrates as well as 1435 plant species.

Out of these, 11 mammal species, 45 bird species, 2 amphibian and 13 reptile species found in the national park are on the list of Appendix II of the Bern Convention, thus signifying the importance of the site for the biodiversity protection. 12 out of 1435 plant species are endemic, 29 are rare and 404 are registered as medicinal plants.

Moreover, the national park "Mavrovo" is an Emerald site and a future Natura 2000 site.

Population assessment of certain species

Lynx lynx - it is estimated that around 15-20 individuals permanently inhabit the National Park Mavrovo, which serves as a core area for its breeding.

Canis lupus - estimated population of 250 individuals.

Ursus arctos - estimated population of 80 individuals.

Rupicapra rupicapra balcánica - estimated population 1500 individuals.

A detailed overview of all species found in Mavrovo National Park, included in the Appendices of the Bern Convention is appended.

It is planned that within the territory of the Mavrovo National Park several hydro power projects (HPP) will be constructed: Large HPP Boskov Most, Small HPP with accumulation Lukovo Pole, 29 small hydro power plants. These projects will need the supporting infrastructure to be constructed such as roads, bridges and transmission lines. All these contribute to the fragmentation of habitats, which threatens the existence of large carnivores for example. Also, water sources such as streams and rivers as well as the wildlife living there and in the surrounding areas will be mostly affected as the water is intended to be canalized for the needs of the power plants and accumulations. In addition, the existing power plants and accumulations result in dry river beds in the summer period as biological minimum is not maintained.

Power plant and supporting infrastructure construction will result in a longer term (approximately 4 years for large hydro power plant construction) disturbance of the area. Boskov most area, where the large power plant is planned is the home of the Balkan Lynx. Machinery, blasting, and long term presence of humans in the area will result not only in direct destruction of forests and other habitats but will also bring nuisance to birds and mammals.

A complaint to the EBRD - Project complain mechanism- for the Boshkov Most HPP project was submitted by Eko-svest because the project area is known to be crucial for the existence of the *Lynx lynx* balcanicus, which IUCN has identified as critically endangered. According EBRD's Environmental policy, the Bank is not allowed to invest in projects located in critical habitats (or areas necessary for the existence of critically endangered species). The process is still ongoing. The complaint was found eligible in March 2012.

A second complaint was lodged to question the decision of the Ministry of environment and physical planning of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" for the adoption of the Environmental Impact Assessment study for the Boskov most HPP project. The complaint was submitted by Front 21/42 environmental NGO since the EIA study found deficiency in data and as a result a 12 month bio-monitoring process was designed and approved by the EBRD and project sponsor ELEM. Without waiting for the data to amend the EIA, the Ministry adopted the document. The process is still ongoing.

Complementary information:

- Environmental Impact Assessment study for the Boskov Most Hydro power plant are available at http://www.moepp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/ESIA-BOSKOV%20MOST.pdf only in Macedonian language.
- Study for valorisation of Mavrovo protected area, Oxfam Italy, are available upon request (we can provide Macedonian version of the document).
- Monitoring reports for the Boskov Most area, summer and autumn 2012, available upon request in English language (AD Elektrani na Makedonija, 2012; Environmental monitoring in the pre-construction phase over the area of HPP Boshkov Most – Reporst on summer and autumn periods; Empiria EMS, Skopje; Tehnolab, Skopje; Society for Study and Protectionof Birds of Macedonia.)
- Project summary documents (of larger projects): Lukovo pole, http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P112730/lukovo-pole-water-regulation-renewable-energy-project?lang=en
  Boskov Most HPP, http://www.ebrd.com/pages/project/eia/41979.shtml
- IUCN letter from 2.2.2012, entitled Conservation assessment of the Balkan Lynx- Lynx lynx balcanicus, available in English language upon request, finds that "beyond any doubt, the Balkan lynx has to be considered as Critically Endangered according to IUCN criteria".
- IUCN Motion for the protection of Mavrovo, http://portals.iucn.org/docs/2012congress/motions/en/M-061-2012-EN.pdf

Appendix 1

Overview of species found in Mavrovo National Park, included in the Appendices of the Bern Convention

Plantae

Ramonda serbica, Appendix I

Campanula abietina, Appendix I

Insecta

Lindenia tetraphylla, Appendix II

Parnassius apollo, Appendix II

Parnassius mnemosyne, Appendix II

Zerynthia polyxena, Appendix II

Euphydryas aurinia, Appendix II

Pachychilon macedonicum, Appendix III (listed under Rutilus macedonicus)

Euphydryas maturna, Appendix II (listed under Hypodryas maturna)

Euphydryas aurinia, Appendix II (listed under Euphydryas (Eurodryas) aurinia)

Phengaris arion, Appendix II (listed under Maculinea arion)

Amphibia

Hyla arborea, Appendix II

Rana dalmatina, Appendix II

Reptilia

Emys orbicularis, Appendix II

Ablepharus kitaibelii, Appendix II

Algyroides nigropunctatus, Appendix II

Lacerta viridis, Appendix II

Lacerta trilineata, Appendix II

Lacerta agilis, Appendix II

Podarcis muralis, Appendix II

Podarcis tauricus, Appendix II

Podarcis erhardii, Appendix II

Natrix tessellate, Appendix II

Coronella austriaca, Appendix II

Vipera ammodytes, Appendix II

Vipera ursinii macrops, Appendix II

Aves

Acanthis canabina, Appendix II

Alauda arvensis, Appendix III

Alcedo atthis, Appendix II
Alectoris graeca, Appendix III
Anas querquedula, Appendix III
Aquila chrysaetos, Appendix II
Aythya ferina, Appendix III
Aythya nyroca, Appendix III
Bubo bubo, Appendix II
Caprimulgus europaeus, Appendix II
Carduelis chloris, Appendix II
Carduelis spinus, Appendix II
Certhia brachydactyla, Appendix II
Cicaetus gallicus, Appendix II
Columba oenas, Appendix III
Coturnix coturnix, Appendix III
Crex crex, Appendix II
Dendrocopos medius, Appendix II
Emberiza calandra, Appendix III
Emberiza cia, Appendix II
Emberiza cirlus, Appendix II
Emberiza citronella, Appendix II
Emberiza hortulana, Appendix III
Erithacus rubecula, Appendix II
Falco peregrinus, Appendix II
Falco tinnunculus, Appendix II
Ficedula albicolis, Appendix II
Ficedula hypoleuca, Appendix II
Fringilla coelebs, Appendix III
Gyps fulvus, Appendix II
Hirundo rustica, Appendix II
Jynx torquilla, Appendix II
Lanius collurio, Appendix II
Lyrurus tetrix, Appendix III
Lullula arborea, Appendix III
Luscinia megarhynchos, Appendix II
Monticola saxatilis, Appendix II
Monticola solitarius, Appendix II
Muscicapa striata, Appendix II
Otus scops, Appendix II

Parus caeruleus, Appendix II
Parus lugubris, Appendix II
Perdix perdix, Appendix III
Pernis apivorus, Appendix II
Phoenicurus phoenicurus, Appendix II
Phylloscopus sibilatrix, Appendix II
Picus canus, Appendix II
Picus viridis, Appendix II
Prunella modularis, Appendix II
Regulus ignicapillus, Appendix II
Regulus regulus, Appendix II
Saxicola rubetra, Appendix II
Saxicola torquata, Appendix II
Scolopax rusticola, Appendix III
Serinus serinus, Appendix II
Streptopelia turtur, Appendix III
Strix aluco, Appendix II
Sylvia atricapilla, Appendix II
Sylvia communis, Appendix II
Sylvia nisoria, Appendix II
Turdus merula, Appendix III
Turdus philomelos, Appendix III
Turdus pilaris, Appendix III
Turdus viscivorus, Appendix III

Mammalia

Hypsugo savii, Appendix II
Pipistrellus kuhlii, Appendix II
Eptesicus serotinus, Appendix II
Miniopterus schreibersii, Appendix II
Myotis mystacinus, Appendix II
Crocidura suaveolens, Appendix II
Canis lupus, Appendix II
Lutra lutra, Appendix II
Ursus arctos, Appendix II
Felis silvestris, Appendix II
Lynx lynx, Appendix II
Rupicapra rupicapra balcanica, Appendix III