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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

46th meeting
Strasbourg, 7-11 December 2026,
Strasbourg

Bureau of the Standing Committee

7-9 April 2026,
Strasbourg

Complaint on Stand-by: 2023/01

**Alleged habitat destruction due to the construction of the
Skavica Hydropower Plant on the Drin River (Albania)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

*Document prepared by the
Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania*

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

REPUBLICA E SHQIPËRISË

January 23, 2026

Subject: Complaint No. 2023/01: Stand-by: Albania: Alleged habitat destruction due to the construction of the Skavica Hydropower Plant on the Drin River

Following the ordinary meeting of 2025 on 8-10 April, the Bureau of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, as required we are submitting the updated report/information based also on what was cited in the previous report:

Background information

The Skavica Hydropower Project (HEC Skavica) is a proposed large-scale dam and hydroelectric power plant on the Black Drin River in northeastern Albania. It is planned to be built upstream of the existing Drin cascade of hydropower plants, which includes Fierza, Koman, and Vau i Dejës. The project has been in discussion for decades and remains one of the largest potential energy infrastructure projects in Albania.

Main goals:

- Increase renewable electricity generation.
- Improve water regulation and reduce downstream flood risks.
- Strengthen energy independence and reduce reliance on imported power.
- Optimize the performance of the Drin cascade.
- Skavica hydropower project will take place entirely within the state borders of Albania. No transboundary impacts are expected. This is due both to the location of the project and to the fact that the river's water flow is directed from North Macedonia toward Albania, and not the other way around.

- **Preparatory studies continue on feasibility, environmental, social, and geological aspects.**
- **These efforts include stakeholder consultations and plans for stakeholder feedback on environmental/social assessments and compensation strategies.**

- **Albania's state power utility, KESH (Korporata Elektroenergjetike Shqiptare), leads the project.**

Government of Albania and KESH are dedicated to adhering to all applicable international and national laws, as well as industry best practices, in evaluating the viability of the Skavica Project. Bechtel and the consultants engaged for phase one—which includes technical feasibility studies, ESIA, and related assessments—are required to comply with IFC standards and all relevant European regulations. **It is important to note that phase one is currently ongoing. According to the information available, the status of the Skavica HPP as of January 2025 remains unchanged from December 2025.**

- The field investigations and studies have been completed, including the technical reports and the preliminary design by consultant Bechtel. According to legal provisions, the technical opposition for the technical reports and the preliminary design has been carried out by the Albanian Polytechnic University of Tirana (UPT). completed.
- **The technical report for the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), prepared by Bechtel and Golder in compliance with national legislation and IFC standards, has been submitted.** This report will be finalised following reviews by KESH and an independent third party.
- Subsequent consultations with relevant stakeholders will occur once the project's technical and financial feasibility is established. The implementation phase will commence only after full compliance with all stakeholder engagement requirements—including those related to the ESIA and the reallocation plan, which must adhere to both IFC international best practices and applicable local laws—has been achieved.
- The Financial Advisor has conducted comprehensive assessments of KESH's bankability, the project's financial feasibility, and has initiated market research among financial institutions regarding potential financing options; these activities are currently ongoing. KESH is also engaging in further discussions with financial institutions that may express interest in supporting the project's financing. It should be noted that all financial institutions require strict adherence to both European and local laws and regulations concerning environmental and social impacts.
- The above reports will be shared with the public after they have passed the administrative review process by the stakeholders involved, both within and outside KESH, and have taken their final form.
- The Council of Ministers will make the final decision regarding the continuation of subsequent project phases, such as the ESIA process, implementation etc, based on both

the commitment of financial institutions to support the Skavica Project and the completion of all required reports, including the ESIA consultation phase with stakeholders, that will commence only after these documents have been finalized. While the Government of Albania (GoA) may approve phase one, initiation of phase two—the ESIA process, followed by the implementation phase—will be contingent upon strict adherence to all environmental and social requirements. The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) approval process will conform to both local regulations and international best practices, and project implementation may proceed only after this process is successfully completed.

Summary

- The Skavica Project is **one of Albania’s most ambitious hydropower initiatives**, designed to bolster energy output and control the Drin cascade more effectively. It is supported by the government as vital for renewable energy and flood management.
- The **Skavica Hydropower Project remains officially active**, with government steps formalizing the project. However, it is **not yet under construction**.
- Its future depends on completed studies, legal outcomes, and political decisions over the coming years.