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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

43rd meeting
Strasbourg, 28 November - 1 December 2023

Complaint on stand-by: 2016/09

**Possible threat to Svaneti 1 Candidate Emerald
site from Nenskra HPP (Georgia)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

*Document prepared by
the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia*

N 584/01 584-01-2-202301311737

31/01/2023

To: The Secretary of the Bern Convention

To: Ms. Ursula Sticker

Copy: Permanent Representation of Georgia to the Council of Europe

Subject:

Complaint on stand-by No. 2016/9: Georgia: Possible threat to “Svaneti 1” Candidate Emerald Site (GE0000012) from Nenskra Hydro Power Plant development – Progress report by Georgia

Dear Ms. Sticker,

In response to the Bureau of the Standing Committee decision on 6-7 April, 2022 the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia would like to provide a progress report as follows:

- The draft law on “Water Resources Management” is submitted to the Parliament for adoption and is in the hearing process within thematic committees (Financial, Economical, Law, Agrarian, Regional, Environmental).
- The territory of Georgia is divided into 7 river basin districts, which either belong to the Black Sea or Caspian Sea basins. The draft versions of the river basin management plans are prepared for the Chorokhi-Ajaristskali, Khrami-Debeda and Alazani-Iori River basin districts. The tender procedure has selected the company for preparation of Enguri and Rioni River Basin districts.
- Georgia had made many efforts in regards to freshwater habitat protection by adopting the 3 compensatory sites (covering over 387 000 ha), prepared management plans, research on the freshwater habitats in the West and East Georgia. In spite of all above-mentioned, we would like to note that the discussions during the Biogeographical Seminar regarding Freshwater habitats were decided in favor of the NGOs and did not necessarily consider the position of the Ministry.
- Freshwater habitat G1.127 which comprises more than 2288 ha, was not assessed and considered during biogeographical seminar. Additionally, we would like to once again assure you that the inventory of any habitats country wise takes a great effort and we continue to implement it step by step.
- The National Energy Policy document, as well as National Energy and Climate Action Plan is under development and already circulated among government authorities for agreement.
- In accordance with the information provided by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the total amount of planned hydropower plants composes around 2082 MgWt on a country level.
- Regarding the small HPPs reported by the complainant in the tributaries of rivers Nakra, Nenskra, Enguri, the information that the HPPs are built without environmental impact assessment is misleading. The environmental decisions of these hydropower projects were made by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture in (Ecological decision N46, 18.07.2017; Environmental decision N2-150, 15.02.2019; Ecological decision N44 18.07.2017 Environmental decision N2-151, 15.02.2019; Ecological decision N45, 18.07.2017 Environmental decision N2-167 20.02.2019).

- Concerning the strategic environmental assessment, we would like to inform you that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has entered into force on 1 July 2018.

Considering all above-mentioned efforts and circumstances, Georgia requests from the Bureau to close the complaint **on stand-by No. 2016/9 with a condition to monitor national developments in the future.**

Sincerely,

Deputy Minister

Nino Tandilashvili

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'N. Tandilashvili', written in a cursive style.