

Strasbourg, 21 February 2022

T-PVS/Files(2022)26

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November – 2 December 2022

Open case-file: 2016/05

**Presumed negative impact of hydro-power plant
development on the Vjosa river
(Albania)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

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

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION NO. 202 (2018) OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE, ON THE PLANNED HYDRO-POWER PLANT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE VJOSA RIVER (ALBANIA)

Pursuant to the Recommendation No. 202 (2018) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and the Open File 2016/5: Albania: presumed negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Vjosa river, the state-of-play for the reporting period since the last report of July 2021 is as follows:

As presented at the On-line Standing Committee of December 2021 there are developments and concrete steps taken by the Albanian Government for the protection of Vjosa river valley as stated in the last two meetings of the SC of the Bern Convention of 2020 and 2021.

In compliance with the last Standing Committee Decision of 29th November -3rd December 2021, the information below addresses all the points of the Recommendation No. 202 (2018) for Albania:

1. Referring the suspension of Kalivac and Pocem HPP projects – both HPPs are suspended.
This is due to the fact that Vjosa river area is now officially designated as Nature Park (Category IV) with an area of 7989,5 hectares, by the latest Decision of the Council of Ministers' of 26th January 2022 and following the Decision of the National Territory Council no. 10, of 28 December 2020 (as informed last year). Attached this report there is the [Official Journal publication](#) that confirms its entry into force (in Albanian language, but for reference purposes).
2. Vjosa river management plan update: EUSIWM project is carrying out this year the assessment study. In the same time pursuant to the declaration as a Natural park of Vjosa river valley area, there will be the management plan for this Protected Area, in compliance with the provisions of the Law "On protected areas" 41/2017.
3. The study on potential impacts of Kalivac and Pocem HPP is not applicable any longer as the area is already protected, thus such activities are not compatible with its protection status.
4. Revision and update of Emerald network for Albania is being considered and will done so once the funding is available.
5. EIA study repeat for Pocem and Kalivac is also not applicable as HPP projects are rejected. The same argument goes for bullet point 6 for the consultations of EIA with local people.
6. Revision of EIA training programme: the DCM on the EIA experts is being revised and updated together with the timeframe and its training programme.
7. SEA study on other energy sources producing options: there is a study commissioned by UNDP Albania of 2020 that addresses this issue.
8. Jointly workshops for the process: there have been a series of three workshops held, during the period 2019-2020, jointly organized with the NGOs and scientists from the University of Vienna.
9. Improvement of cooperation between Government Ministries and their agencies and independent experts at the other had: The cooperation is extended and the process of revision of the network of protected Areas in Albania has served as a tool on this matter. Capacity building of Albanian scientists is also strengthened through the participation in different workshop organized in the context of projects being implemented in Albania, like SANE 27 Supporting Albanian Negotiations on Environment, Chapter 27 (funded by Swedish Government) for the negotiations and SANE 2, which has just started as well as several IPA CBC projects of different programmes where MTE is partner.
10. Regarding bullet point 11, the latest developments are related to the establishment by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of a Working Group that will initiate a process of commissioning of a complete study for the assessment of Vjosa valley area and its valued and specific features. This extended study will also look at the possibilities of upgrading the status of Vjosa protected Area to a National Park.
11. Regular twice yearly reports for the Bern Convention are prepared each year, as required by the Recommendation.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment takes this opportunity to reiterate the commitment for the protection of Vjosa valley area and its promotion as a touristic area.