

Balkan Rivers News



Dear Friends of the Balkan Rivers,

Lots of things have happened at the Balkan Rivers since our last newsletter in October. Here are the highlights:

* Mavrovo: Case against Macedonia

The Standing Committee of the Bern Convention (= Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) is initiating proceedings against Macedonia due to the projected construction of hydropower plants in the Mavrovo National Park. A group of experts will investigate whether the projects violate the Convention. [More](#)



Portal of entrance of Mavrovo National Park: A total of 18 hydropower plants are projected within the territory of the park. Photo: Romy Durst

* Mavrovo 2: Arbitrariness of public authorities, chicanery and dam opponents

In the renowned newspaper "Neue Züricher", Journalist Andreas Ernst reports about the critical situation on site, the chicanery of the authorities, as well as the commitment of dam opponents... Sorry, in German only! "[The last refugium of the Balkan Lynx](#)"



The dams put the habitat of the endangered Balkan Lynx at risk. Photo: Wolf Steiger

* Vjosa Tour: Municipalities and people want national park instead of dams

In mid-December, the first public discussions about the future of the Vjosa Valley took place in southern Albania. While the government envisage the construction of eight dams along the river, the mayors and people of the affected communities support the alternative idea of establishing a national park. [More](#)



Ca.150 locals participated in the 2 events and many sign a declaration to stop the dam projects and protect the river as a national park instead. Photo: Roland Tasho

*** Sava River: NGOs protest**

In an [open letter](#), 15 environmental NGOs protest against the intention of the International Sava River Basin Commission to adopt a management plan for the Sava River basin. This plan is based on misleading and false data; it is violating EU legislation and risking the future of the Sava – one of the most valuable river ecosystems in Europe. [More](#)



The Sava downstream of Zagreb, one of Europe's finest rivers. According to the Sava Commission this stretch is "heavily modified"
Photo: Goran Šafarek

*** Hydropower projects planned in Una National Park in Bosnia**

Together with international investors, the Bihać municipality is lobbying to amend the federal spatial plan in order to allow building small hydropower plants in the [heart of the Una National Park](#). Proposals for 4 locations have already been put forward. These plans threaten to destroy the most beautiful spots in the park, such as a spectacular travertine laguna of numberless small islands and waterfalls. Local resistance exists; however, the issue is still rather unknown to the wider public.



River travertine at Martin Brod inside Una National Park. The municipality intends to build a hydropower plant just above it.
Photo: Dunja Delić

*** Balkan Rivers Trailer**

Next spring, we will present a 15-20 minutes documentary about the Balkan Rivers – their uniqueness and threats. Sneak a peek and [watch the trailer!](#) Please tell your friends!



*** New Staff for Sava in Croatia**

Gligor Radečić (28) will soon support our Team Sava. Based in Zagreb, he will be responsible for coordinating the Sava campaign in Croatia and downstream.



National Campaign Coordinator for Croatia: Gligor Radečić

*** Double Award for Balkan Rivers**

On November 14th, the campaign “Save the Blue Heart of Europe” received two awards in Vaduz/Liechtenstein. Riverwatch CEO and coordinator of the Blue Heart campaign [Ulrich Eichelmann](#) was awarded the “[Great Binding Prize for Nature Conservation](#)”. EuroNatur president [Christel Schroeder](#) received one of the other three 2014 Binding Prizes. The campaign team congratulates them!



Binding prize winners Ulrich Eichelmann and Christel Schroeder.
Photos: Klaus Schädler

All the best,

Your Blue Heart Team