

# Albania: A non-compliant EIA of HPP Pocem on Vjosa river, EnC opens dispute settlement procedure

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Hydro power plant project Pocem is to be located on the Vjosa river. The Energy Community (EnC) Secretariat sent an opening letter to Albania, addressing its concerns with regard to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the HPP Pocem project on the river.

In particular, the Secretariat preliminary found that the administrative procedures conducted for the project were not in line with the provisions of Directive 2011/92/EU, with particular regard to the Directive's requirements on the content of the environmental report and its public participation provisions.

By sending the opening letter, the Secretariat initiated a preliminary procedure, the purpose of which is to give Albania the opportunity to react to the allegation of non-compliance with Energy Community law within two months and to enable the Secretariat to establish the full background of the case.

Last year, Environmental organizations EcoAlbania, Riverwatch and EuroNatur filed a complaint with the Secretariat in which they protest against the construction of two hydro power plants on the Vjosa river – Kalivac and Pocem, claiming that the projects are not in compliance with the EnC rules. This is the first time a complaint has been filed with the EnC regarding hydro power projects in Albania. The complaint addresses violations of the EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) related to the hydro power projects Kalivac and Pocem. The EIA Directive is an integral part of the Energy Community's regulatory framework. Furthermore, both the company and public authorities failed to meet public consultation requirements. The complaint is emphasizing the evident infringements of Energy Community rules.