



Less than a week after the resignation of the first deputy prime minister and advocate of the construction of the underground hydro power plant on Ombla, Radimir Cacic, this week's presentation of the report on the environmental impact of construction and operation of HPP Ombla was suddenly postponed. Presentation was supposed to be held on November 19, in front of the Minister for Environmental Protection, Mihael Zmajlović by companies WSP and B & W that were hired by investors from Croatian Electric Power Industry and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) which financed the power plant worth 123 million, but the presentation was canceled without explanation.

It opens door to speculation starting from whether the construction of HPP would be put on hold after Cacic leaving the government to the rumor that the research of consortium companies only confirms already familiar negative results of the audits which say that hydro power plants in Ombla has already permanently harmed the flora and fauna of Rijeka dubrovacka and increased the seismic activity in an already volatile region.

Although the former deputy prime minister in October together with the construction of power plant Plomin, announced HPP Ombla as a done investment that will help the overall investment momentum of Croatian economy, but the question is whether EBRD would financially support the project. This summer this financial institution announced a review of the decision on funding hydro power plant following the complaint of Green Action, which drew attention to the harmfulness and unprofitability of the project.

EBRD agreed to finance the energy project in November 2011 but asked for more studies of biodiversity as a precondition, which have not been properly conducted before. Dubrovnik civil activists do not know why was the presentation of the report of HEP's foreign consultants delayed.

- I know only that the presentation was not supposed to be public, but internal. I assume that the HEP as a client, wished to present additional biological study to a representative of the European Commission besides minister Zmajlovic so they did not want any negative reaction from the public to interfere. We too can hardly wait for the news of other studies - said the representative of Dubrovnik Civic Initiatives "Srd je nas" Duro Capor.

We asked about the current status of the investment on Ombla at the Ministry of Environmental Protection, but a spokeswoman Diana Dryer asked for patience:

- This is a complex topic for which a deputy minister is in charge and we can not interrupt him during the meeting. The normal deadline for responding to media inquiries is 24 hours they told us in Zmajlović ministry.

*Source Serbia Energy Magazine*