

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Environmental permit for HPP Buk Bijela annulled

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Date : June 1, 2019

The Banja Luka District Court issued a verdict which upholds the lawsuit filed by the Aarhus Center in BiH against the decision of the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology on the issuance of the environmental permit for hydropower plant Buk Bijela.

In June 2018, Aarhus Center filed a lawsuit due to procedural irregularities in the renewal of environmental permit for HPP Buk Bijela. The investor, state-owned power utility ERS, did not request the permit renewal within the legal deadline and the Ministry should have annulled the previous permit because the construction of the plant did not start within four years of permit's issuance.

In early March, Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (RS) decided to cooperate on the project for the construction of HPP Buk Bijela, besides already agreed joint development of the projects for the construction of hydropower plants Foca and Paunci on the Drina river. At the meeting of the Energy Committee of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, it was concluded that the construction of these facilities, whose combined installed capacity exceeds 180 MW, would equally contribute to the stability of energy systems of both countries.

So-called Upper Drina project consists of HPP Buk Bijela, HPP Foca, HPP Paunci and HPP Sutjeska. According to original plans, overall power output of all four HPPs should be 238 MW, while annual electricity generation should reach 800 GWh (HPP Buk Bijela - 115 MW, HPP Foca - 52 MW, HPP Paunci - 36 MW and HPP Sutjeska - 35 MW). According to the studies, two HPPs on Drina river should be built in 5 and 6 years, while overall investment in the construction of all four HPPs would reach 460 million euros.