

On the Drina river, foundation stone for the hydropower plant Buk Bijela was laid. This marks the official start of the construction of this project. Prime Ministers of the Republic of Srpska (RS) and Serbia Radovan Viskovic and Ana Brnabic have laid a foundation stone. According to plans, the construction of HPP Buk Bijela should be completed in four years. However, the project is opposed by the other entity - the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which claims that it does not have an approval on the state level. In March 2019, RS and Serbia 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. In June 2016, the contract on the concession grant for the construction and operation of 93.52 MW HPP Buk Bijela between the RS Government and the consortium which consists of power utility ERS and its subsidiary "Hidroelektrane na Drini" has been signed. The concession is granted for a period of 50 years and the estimated value of the investment is around 195 million euros. RS agreed to build these three HPPs in cooperation with neighboring Serbia, while ERS merged two of its subsidiaries "Hidroelektrana Buk Bijela" and "Hidroelektrana Foca i Hidroelektrana Paunci" to establish a new company "Hidroenergetski Sistemi Gornja Drina", which would be co-owned by ERS and Serbian EPS, with EPS holding 51 % stake in the company.