

All speakers at recent Environmental uprising protest in Belgrade warned that the environment in Serbia is being rapidly destroyed by numerous harmful processes, which primarily include the construction of derivation SHPPs, uncontrolled deforestation and disposal of industrial and other waste, and mining projects that disrupt the environment. At the protest, the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, Ratko Ristic, drew attention to the danger posed by nature and population to the Rio Tinto Jadarite mine near Loznica. Aleksandar Jovanovic Cuta from the movement "Let's Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina", Desimir Stojanov - Desko from the village of Rakita, professor of the Faculty of Biology Biljana Stojkovic, Iva Markovic from the initiative "Right to Water", Lejla Kusturica from the Coalition for River Protection (BiH) also spoke at the protest.

Environmental organizations announced joint demands before the protest. The list of requests includes respect for the Constitution and existing laws in the field of environmental protection, harmonization of regulations with the highest standards of protection, participation of citizens in healthy environmental issues and increasing the area under protection and active implementation of adequate measures. In addition, environmental associations are, as before, advocating for the suspension of logging in protected areas and afforestation, suspension of construction and revision of harmful SHP projects and conservation of water resources. Environmentalists and activists are also aware of the catastrophic situation in urban areas, and demand that the principles of sustainability be respected in urban planning, as opposed to, as they state, the current investor urbanism. Some of the other items that were supported by their presence today were active waste management, development of a quality air plan, sustainable development, and development and adoption of the National Energy Climate Plan. This plan should regulate an environmentally sound and justified transition to renewable energy sources.

The Minister of Environmental Protection, Irena Vujovic, reacted to the protest with a statement stating that the Ministry and other competent departments in the Government are dedicated, responsible and transparent in eliminating environmental problems which, according to the statement transmitted by the media, "did not occur overnight".

The main organizer of the protest is the movement Let's Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina, and the protest was supported by over sixty organizations and initiatives from all over Serbia. Among them are the Right to Water initiative, the Joint, the Podrinje anti-corruption team, the movement Let's Defend the Forests of Fruska Gora, the Battle of Vlasina, Let's Not Drown Belgrade and many others. Representatives of the Association of Online Workers also joined the protest, Masina reports.

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