

The international non-governmental organization World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said in a statement that Bulgarian and Romanian projects for the construction of hydropower plants are breaching the EU laws, threatening to harm the habitat of rare species in the Danube-Carpathian region.

In Romania, a consortium of three local companies: Romelectro, Hidroconstructia and ISPH is planning to build three hydropower plants with combined power output of 80 MW on Jiu river, thus endangering Defileul Jiului National Park. The project is based on old construction permits, which are not in line with the latest environmental requirements and the EU laws.

Last September, Bulgarian company Rila Eco Energy received a permit for the construction of small hydropower plant Govedartsi on the rivers Cherni Iskar and Gorna Preka, within the Natura 2000 protected area, which prompted a series of protests from environmental organizations. Bulgarian Ministry of Environment said that it will launch an investigation into this project. WWF's statement said that there is a lack of solutions for critically important projects of public interest on the rivers of Cherni Iskar and Gorna Preka in Rila mountain, adding that current situation regarding these projects shows low transparency, lack of consistent decision taking and law infringements made by Bulgarian authorities.