

## Factsheet 13:

### Poçem HPP goes to court

<b>Description</b>	On May 2016, the Albanian government has given a concession to a union of two Turkish companies "AyenerjiŞirketi Anonymous" and "Çinar-San HafriyatNakliyatTurizmInsaat San Ve Tic Ltd.Sti" to build a large dam on the Vjosa. According to Eco Albania's studies, there are 38 HPPs foreseen in the whole Vjosa catchment where 6 new dams projected on the Greek side of the catchment while there is only one existing, the Pigai large dam. 31 HPPs are planned for the Albanian territory: 8 dams are planned along the Vjosa itself while 23 addition HPPs on its tributaries, 4 of which are already finished and are operational, while other 4 are under construction. The project "Poçem" is part of this large plan, and it features a 50 meter high dam that would not only directly affect one of the most valuable sections of the Vjosa due to flooding, it would also have serious downstream effects. The legal procedure is currently ongoing, however, is to be highlighted that the information regarding the EIA, Environmental Permit and Public Hearing regarding this particular project was continuously hidden for more than 7 months, according to the local CSOs. After receiving a copy of the EIA in September 2016, a group of local experts are preparing an analytical report of the EIA which is still ongoing. The local NGO Eco Albania supported by international organizations such as Riverwatch, Euronatur, are advocating for the declaration of Vjosa River as a "No go area", and thus opposing the construction plans in the river. Some 7 protests and more than 70 media articles, press items have been produced for the whole Vjosa river including Poçem HPP. According to official information, the EIA report was presented to the public on 28 February 2015 in Fieri, but the local community and local government affected by this hydropower project is not even informed about this projects while they have protested against the construction.
<b>Basic data</b>	AyenerjiŞirketi Anonymous" and "Çinar-San HafriyatNakliyatTurizmInsaat San Ve Tic Ltd.Sti Installed capacity 102.2 MW and expected production is 3,668 GWh. The project dam will be 50m high and its length 200 m. Dam size will be 23,5 km <sup>2</sup> of submerged area.
<b>Source of conflict</b>	
<b>Project details and actors</b> <b>Project area</b> <b>Level of investment</b>	160.1 Million EUR Eco Albania, local citizens, local administrators, elders of villages, local media, international NGOs scientists, farmers.
<b>The conflict and mobilization</b>	Street protest, EIA alternative study, media engagement, researchers and professional peer-review; lawsuit. Conflict chronology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On 5 February 2016 CSO-s protesting against the Poçem HPP, after the bid was opened by the Ministry of Energy and Industry;.</li> <li>- On 10 February 2016 CSO-s protesting at Hydro Tech Albania Conference against the Poçem HPP and HPPs planned to be built in Vjosa River.</li> <li>- On 13 May 2016, in the frame of the Balkan Rivers Tour, 500 odd people from Europe paddling in protest action on the Vjosa Valley. The tour was led by RokRozman, organized in the frame of the "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign in 16 rivers in 6 countries in 35 days.</li> <li>- On 18 May 2016, a Flotilla protest organized in Qesarat, near Kalivaç HPP. Kayakers, EP member Ms. Ulrike Lunacek and EU Delegation in Albania paddled from Qesarat to Poçem Bridge (potential dam site). Local community and CSO-s protested too.</li> <li>- On 20 May 2016 a protest was held in Tirana in front of Prime Minister Office to cancel all HPPs licenses in Vjosa and in Valbona;</li> <li>- On 8 June 2016 national and international scientists signed a memorandum asking a 3 year moratorium on the Vjosa Valley and a proper EIA for Poçem HPP.</li> <li>- On 14 June 2016 local people from Kutë village blocked the national road Levan-Tepelenë</li> <li>- On 25 June 2016 local people from Kutë village protested together with the local people from Valbona at the PM office in Tirana.</li> <li>- On 8 September 2016 some Slovenian activists protested in Slovenia while PM Rama was invited in an event.</li> <li>- In November 2016, 2,000 local people from Kutë commune signed a petition addressed to PM Rama asking cancellation of Poçem HPP.</li> <li>- On 4 November 2016 local people from Kutë and Sevaster (affected communes on both sides of the river), protested together with CSO-s, local government and Parliamentary Members. A blocking of the national road was organized too.</li> <li>- On 2 December 2016 local people, national NGO EcoAlbania and international NGO-s RiverWatch and EuroNatur filed the lawsuit at Administrative Court of Tirana.</li> </ul>

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<b>Conflict impact</b>	<b>Potential</b> Environmental impact: landscape loss, biodiversity loss, flooding. <b>Potential</b> Social –economic impact: tourism decrease.
<b>Conflict outcome</b>	Licensed No institutional changes Ongoing
<b>Sources and materials/References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="http://balkanrivers.net">http://balkanrivers.net</a></li> <li>- Poçem Hydro Power Plant Factsheet, prepared by Euronatur, River Watch, Eco Albania 2016.</li> <li>- <a href="http://balkanrivers.net/sites/default/files/Prominent%20Supporters.pdf">http://balkanrivers.net/sites/default/files/Prominent%20Supporters.pdf</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://www.ecoalbania.org/228-scientists-from-33-countries-support-europes-last-wild-river/">http://www.ecoalbania.org/228-scientists-from-33-countries-support-europes-last-wild-river/</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://everything.plus/HEC_pocem/CqycP-fDj34.video">http://everything.plus/HEC_pocem/CqycP-fDj34.video</a></li> <li>- Plaintiff lawsuit prepared for Poçem HPP filed at the Tirana Administrative Court;</li> </ul>