



# save the **blue heart** of europe

Cornelia Wieser, Riverwatch,  
[cornelia.wieser@riverwatch.eu](mailto:cornelia.wieser@riverwatch.eu)

Tara Sukic, EuroNatur,  
[tara.sukic@euronatur.org](mailto:tara.sukic@euronatur.org)

Besjana Guri, EcoAlbania,  
[b.guri@ecoalbania.org](mailto:b.guri@ecoalbania.org)



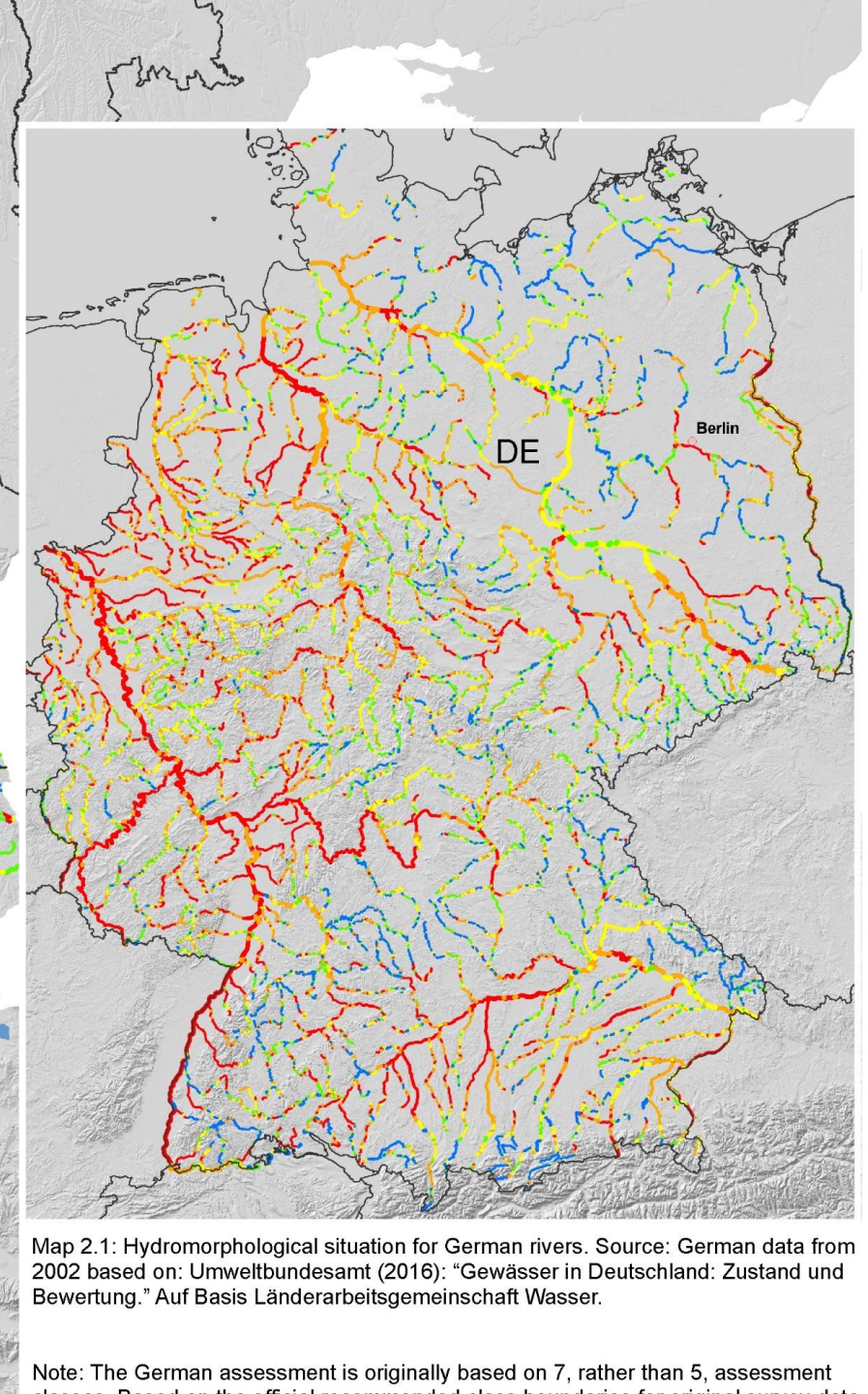




Ammer Selmanovic  
Photography



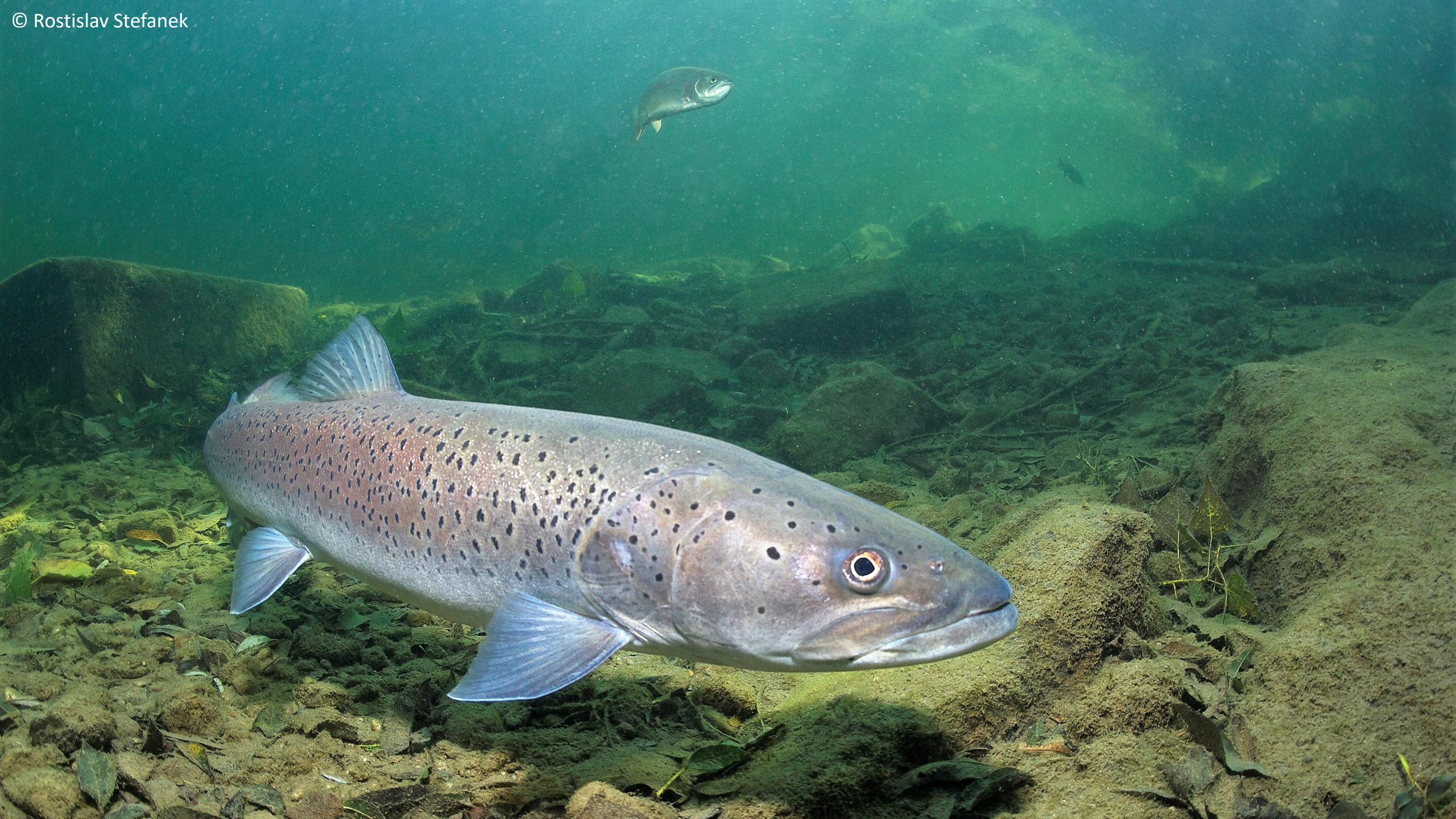




Map 2.1: Hydromorphological situation for German rivers. Source: German data from 2002 based on: Umweltbundesamt (2016): „Gewässer in Deutschland: Zustand und Bewertung.“ Auf Basis Länderarbeitsgemeinschaft Wasser.

Note: The German assessment is originally based on 7, rather than 5, assessment classes. Based on the official recommended class boundaries for river health d







# Balkan Freshwater Fish and Molluscs in Numbers

**113**  
**SPECIES**

listed in one of the three IUCN threat categories and/or listed in one or more of the annexes of the European Habitats Directive or Bern Convention.

**69**

**ENDEMIC FISH SPECIES**  
**ARE FOUND HERE**  
and nowhere else on the planet, making it one of the highest concentrations of endemic fish species in Europe.

**28%**

**OF EUROPE'S ENDANGERED FISH ARE FOUND HERE**

**40%**

**OF EUROPE'S ENDANGERED MOLLUSCS ARE FOUND HERE**  
making the Balkans a hotspot for threatened molluscs which are highly vulnerable to hydropower development.

**FRESHWATER FISH AND MOLLUSCS**

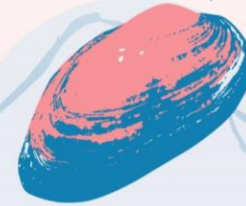
are the two most threatened taxonomic groups in Europe.



DANUBE  
SALMON



ARACHTHOS  
SPINED LOACH



MICROCONDYLEA  
BONELLII

**IF  
DAMS  
ARE  
BUILT:**

**49**

**FISH SPECIES**  
are faced with either the threat of extinction or loss of between 50 and 100% of their Balkan distribution, 11 of these are endemic so will be globally extinct.

**APPROXIMATELY  
10%**

of all of Europe's freshwater fish species are threatened by Balkan dams. (There are around 500 freshwater fish species in Europe).

**108  
OUT OF  
113**

species would become either extinct or assigned to a threat category.



# 1 480

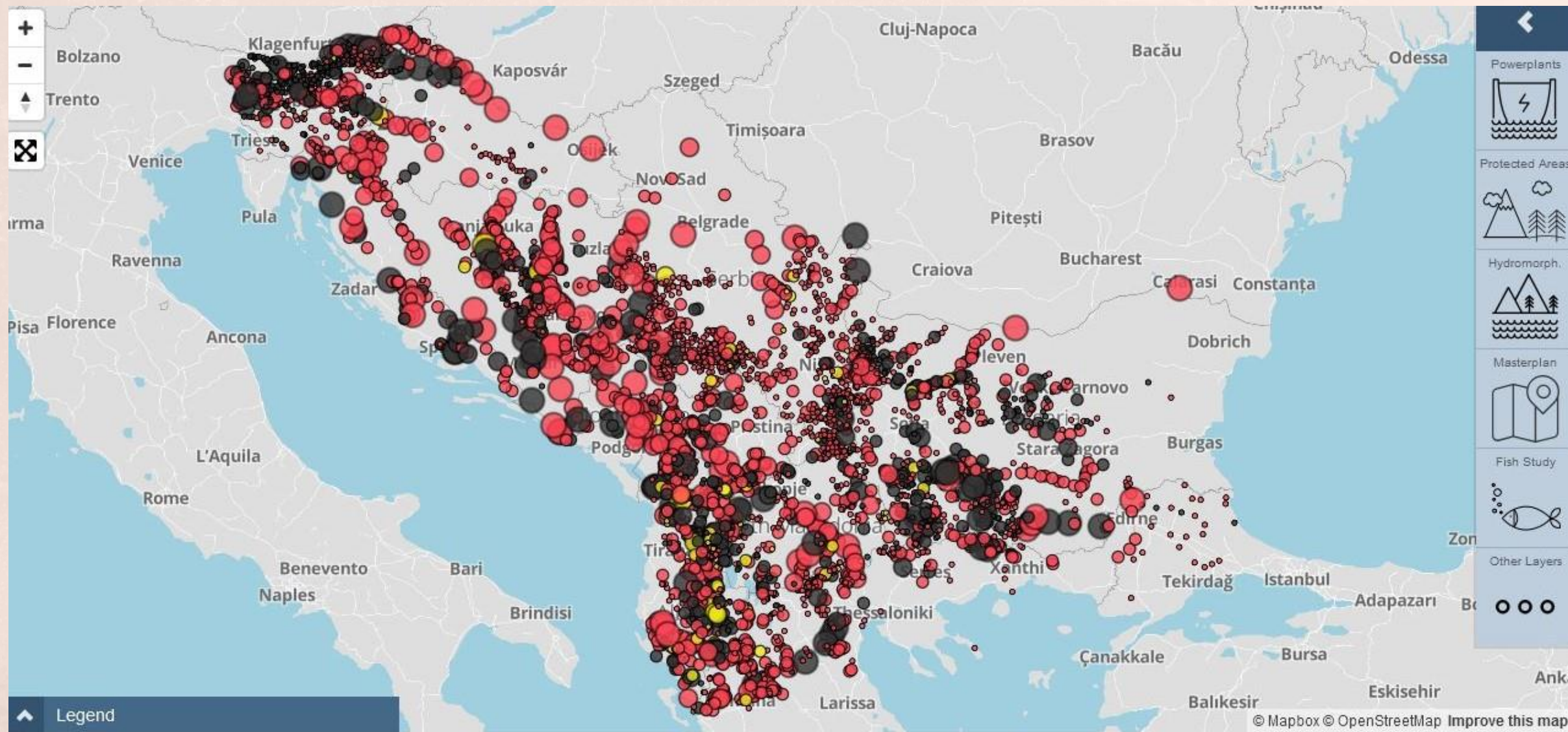
Existing Hydropower plants

# 108

Hydropower plants in progress

# 3 431

Planned Hydropower plants



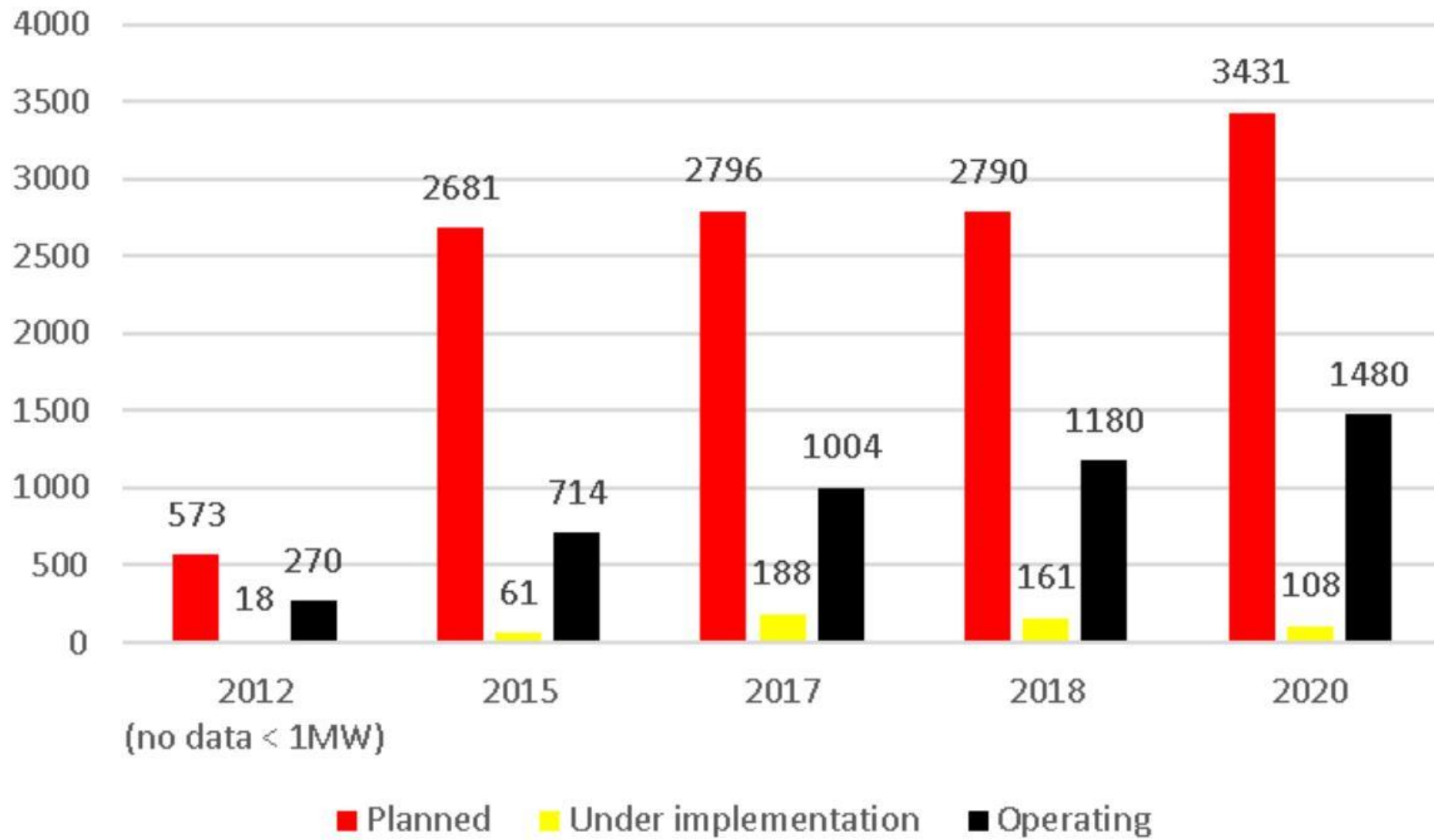
























ENVIRONMENT

# Federation of BiH bans construction of small hydropower plants



Photo: Pixabay

Published  
June 24, 2020

**The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has three months to produce bills and ban small hydropower plants after the**

## NEWSLETTER

Stay informed. In your Inbox  
once a week.

SUBSCRIBE

## MOST POPULAR

April 13, 2021

**Saudi Arabia to add 3.7 GW in solar power, achieves world's lowest price**

October 21, 2021

**Europe's first LFP battery factory**



save the  
**blue  
heart**  
of europe

**SCIENTISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**ACTIVISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**ARTISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**LAWYERS  
FOR RIVERS**



**COMMUNICATION  
FOR RIVERS**



**POLICY  
FOR RIVERS**







# ACTIVISTS FOR RIVERS

---

We support local communities of affected people and activists, who go on the barricade against hydropower projects, as much as we can. They are the cornerstone of the fight for their threatened river heritage.



**KO VODU BRANI  
NA DOBROJ JE STRANI**













Environmental activist Shpresa Loshaj. Photo: BIRN.

## Environmental activist sued by KelKos for €100,000

Austrian hydropower company Kelkos Energy are reportedly seeking 100,000 euros in

### FEATURED

### RELATED



#### River devastation at the centre of BIRN debate

BIRN brought together activists, experts and officials from across Kos...



#### Environmental activist sued by KelKos for €100,000

Austrian hydropower company Kelkos Energy are reportedly seeking 100,0...



#### Environment minister 'ashamed' of river degradation

Members of civil society organisations and residents of the Decani Val...









- Never underestimate the importance of local river defenders
- Support them wherever you can





# SCIENTISTS FOR RIVERS

---

We aim to create a growing group of scientists, who will focus their research on Balkan rivers to provide biological data for legal cases. These scientists will not only lend their data but also their independent voices to protect rivers.











© Joshua Lim





# WILD RIVERS INTERNATIONAL

SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM  
TIRANA, ALBANIA  
OCTOBER 18th, 2019



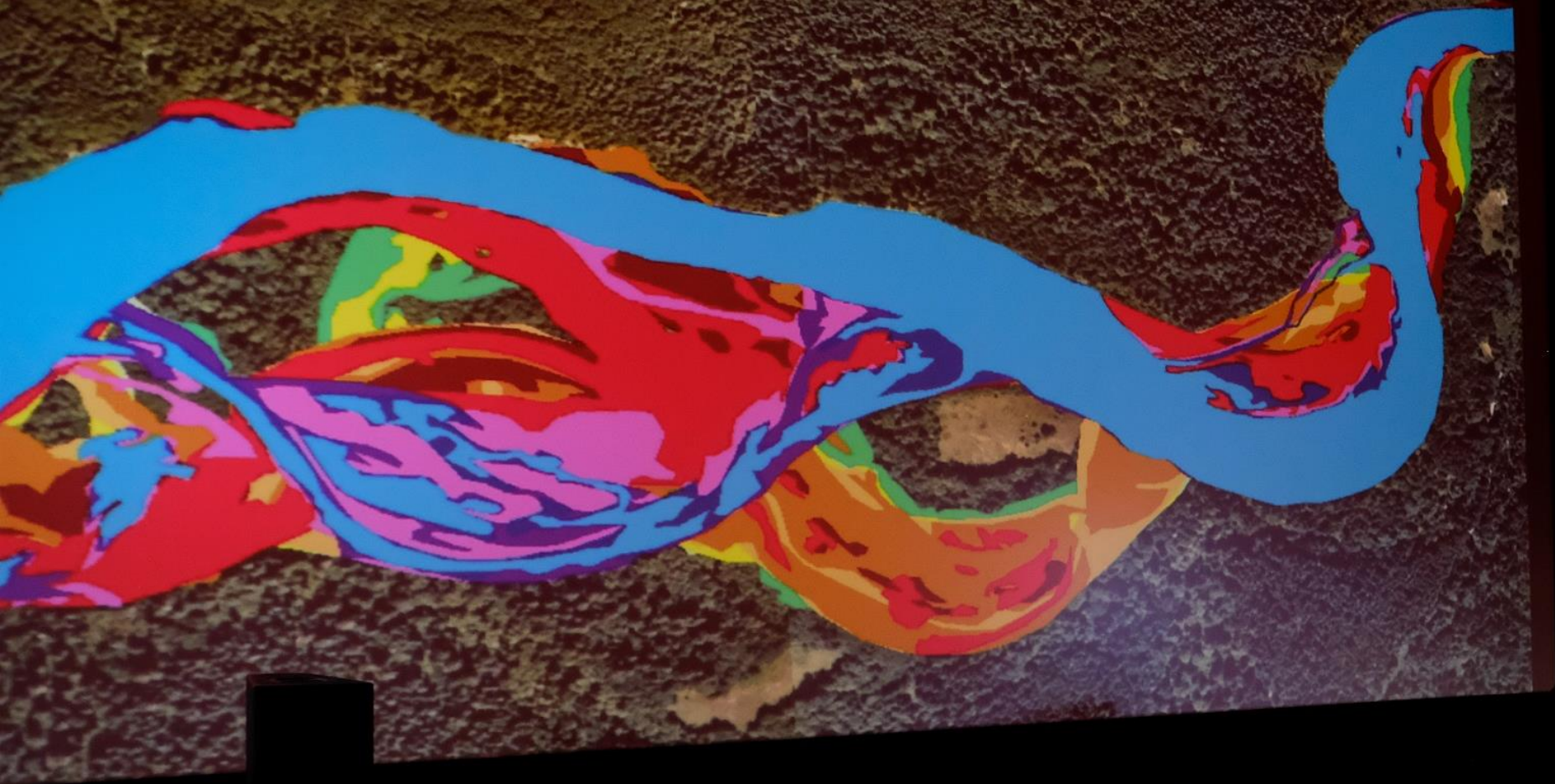




















- Emotionally attach scientists to your river
- Motivate them to speak out for their findings
- Make scientists partners of the campaign
- Be prepared that this requires quite some financial resources





# ARTISTS FOR RIVERS

By mobilizing artists from different disciplines to publicly defend rivers from hydropower, we are connecting to people on an emotional level, as well as reaching individuals who might otherwise be unaware of the threat.











## Musical postcards from Balkan Rivers

Dule Resavac for Balkan Rivers



Insane Insan at River Trebižat



Aida Čorbadžić at River Miljacke



Divanhana at River Bosna



Divanhana at Buna/Neretva confluence



Dubioza Kolektiv for Balkan Rivers



TATA I KIRA for Balkan Rivers



Saša Handžić for Balkan Rivers





Artists for Balkan Rivers Compilation I



Artists for Balkan Rivers Compilation II



Artists for Balkan Rivers - Compilation III



Artists for Balkan Rivers Compilation IV



Artists for Balkan Rivers - Compilation V



Ammar Selmanović for Balkan Rivers



Škart for Balkan Rivers



Branislav Babić (Kebra) for Balkan Rivers



Kralj Čačka for Balkan Rivers





Indir Merdanović for Balkan Rivers



Nikola Vranjković For Balkan Rivers



Adnan Bubalo for Balkan Rivers



Ferida Duraković for Balkan Rivers



Jelena Petošević for Balkan Rivers



Bilja Krstic & Bistrik Orchestra for Balkan Rivers



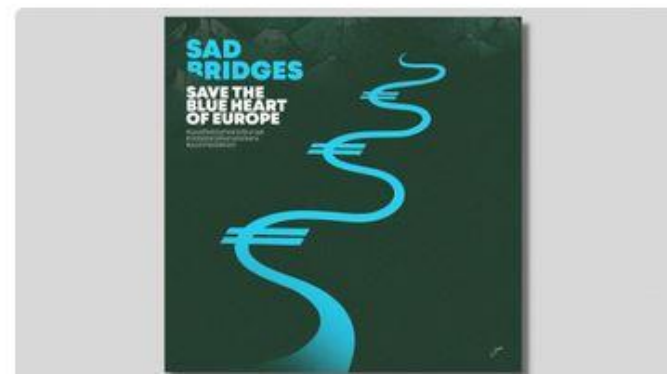
Miodrag Spasojević Štrika for Balkan Rivers



Emir Balić for Balkan Rivers



Haris Jusović for Balkan Rivers







*for Balkan Rivers*

- Invests in emotions!
- Contract a coordinator who is well connected in the artist community



save the  
**blue  
heart**  
of europe

**SCIENTISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**ACTIVISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**ARTISTS  
FOR RIVERS**



**LAWYERS  
FOR RIVERS**



**COMMUNICATION  
FOR RIVERS**



**POLICY  
FOR RIVERS**







# LAWYERS FOR RIVERS

With a team of legal experts, we are creating a wave of lawsuits and complaints against hydropower plants across the Balkans, supporting local communities and boosting awareness in the legal community.





National : EIA, access to information, procedural mistakes  
International: Conventions, Agreements and higher levels of court







## Expanding the Lawyers for Rivers Network





# TOOLKIT

How to use EU and international environmental law  
to protect rivers from hydropower development

<https://www.legaltoolkit4rivers.eu/>





Even starting a case can help a lot

Be ready for a marathon – not a sprint







# POLICY FOR RIVERS

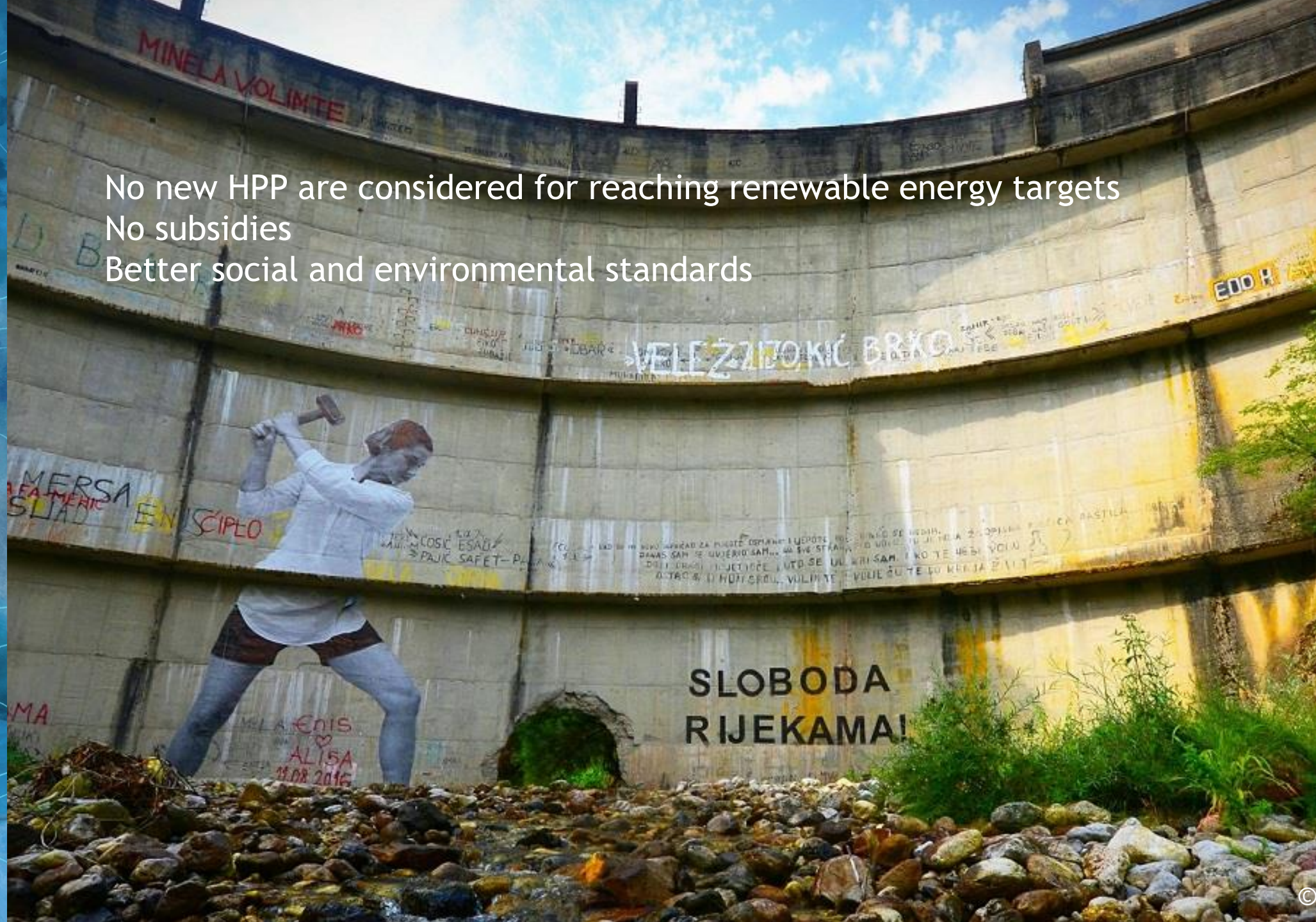
---

By influencing policy-making, we want to drastically increase environmental standards and restrict possibilities for the construction and financing of hydropower dams.





No new HPP are considered for reaching renewable energy targets  
No subsidies  
Better social and environmental standards

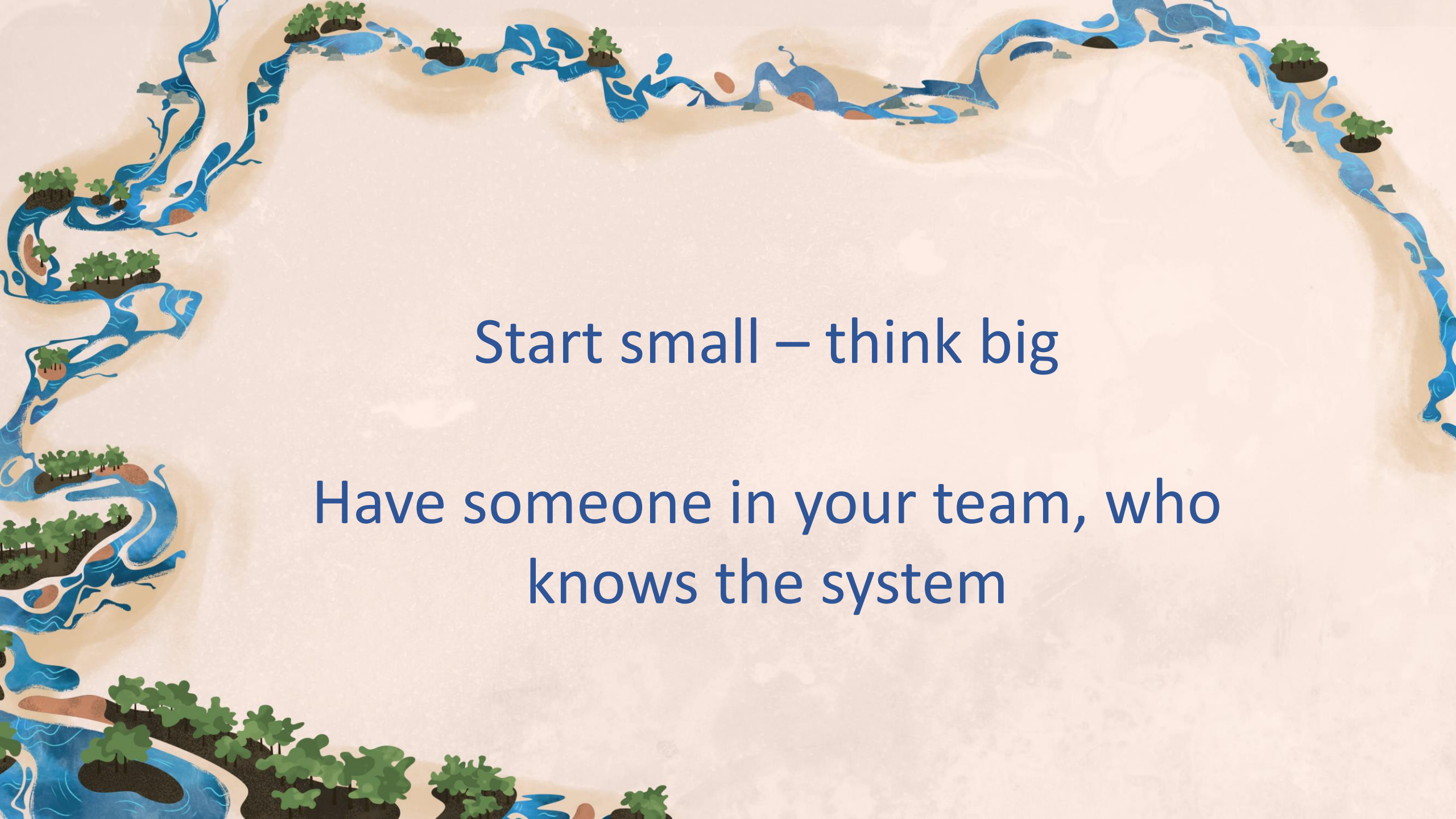






Influencing spatial planning  
Feed in tariffs  
State Aid Guidelines and the EU sustainable Taxonomy





Start small – think big

Have someone in your team, who  
knows the system



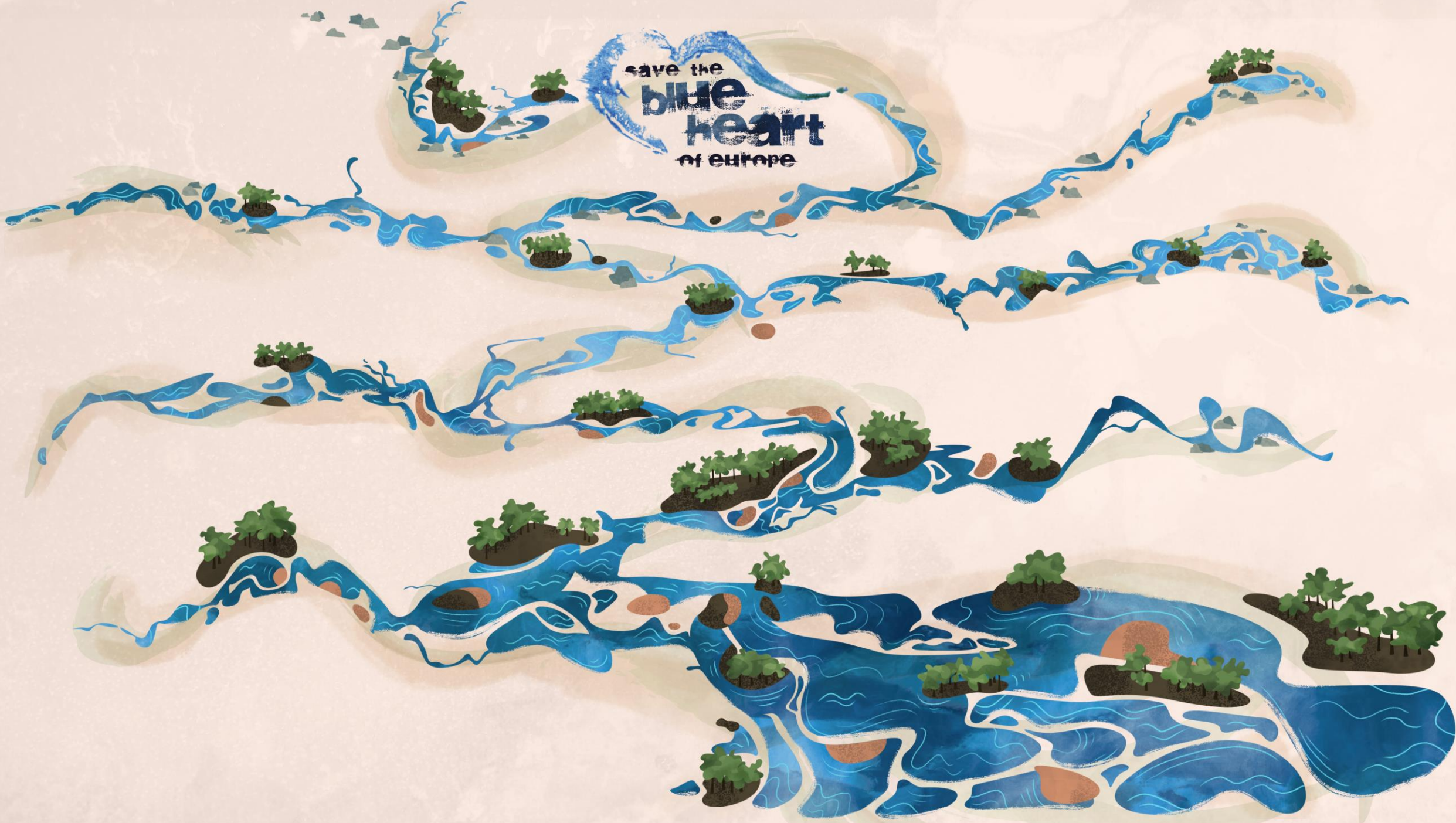


# COMMUNICATION FOR RIVERS

---

By using an arsenal of communication tools, we reach out to ever-larger national and international audiences, creating awareness of the Blue Heart of Europe and its need for protection beyond our bubble of river defenders.





save the  
**blue**  
heart  
of europe



**Sodišče o HE Mokrice: Presoja vplivov na okolje je treba izvesti najprej in v celoti**

**Green Shoots in Serbia a Worry for Ruling Party and Opponents**

**Albania's Vjosa River could be damaged by damns**

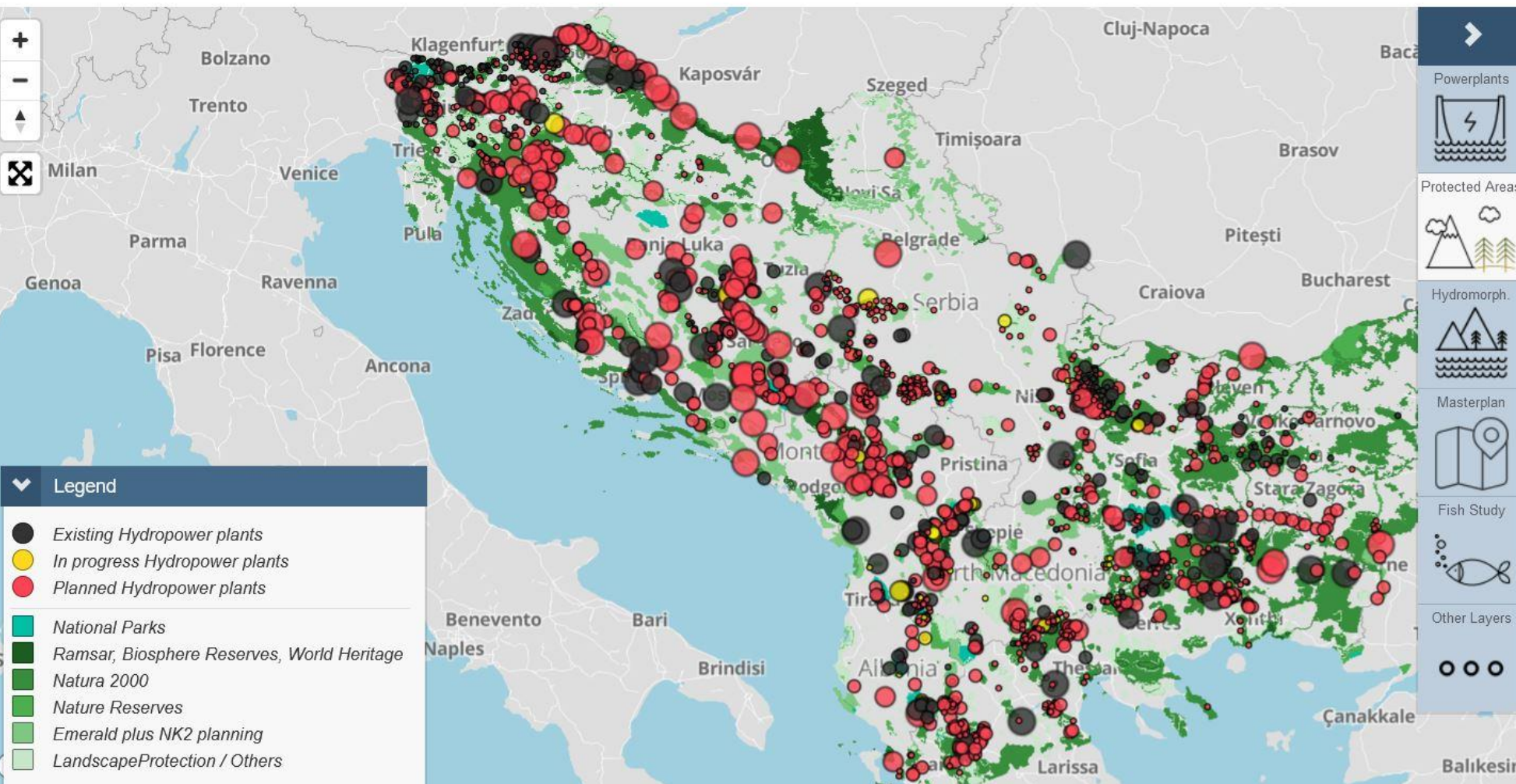
**Comment: Is the Tide Turning on Balkan Hydropower Projects?**

**Federation of BiH to scrap feed-in tariffs for small hydropower plants from 2021**





Save the Blue Heart of Europe - A campaign for the protection of Balkan Rivers



## Protected Areas

Powerplants



Protected Areas



Hydromorph.



Masterplan



Fish Study



Other Layers



National Parks

Ramsar, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage

Natura 2000

Nature Reserves

Emerald plus NK2 planning

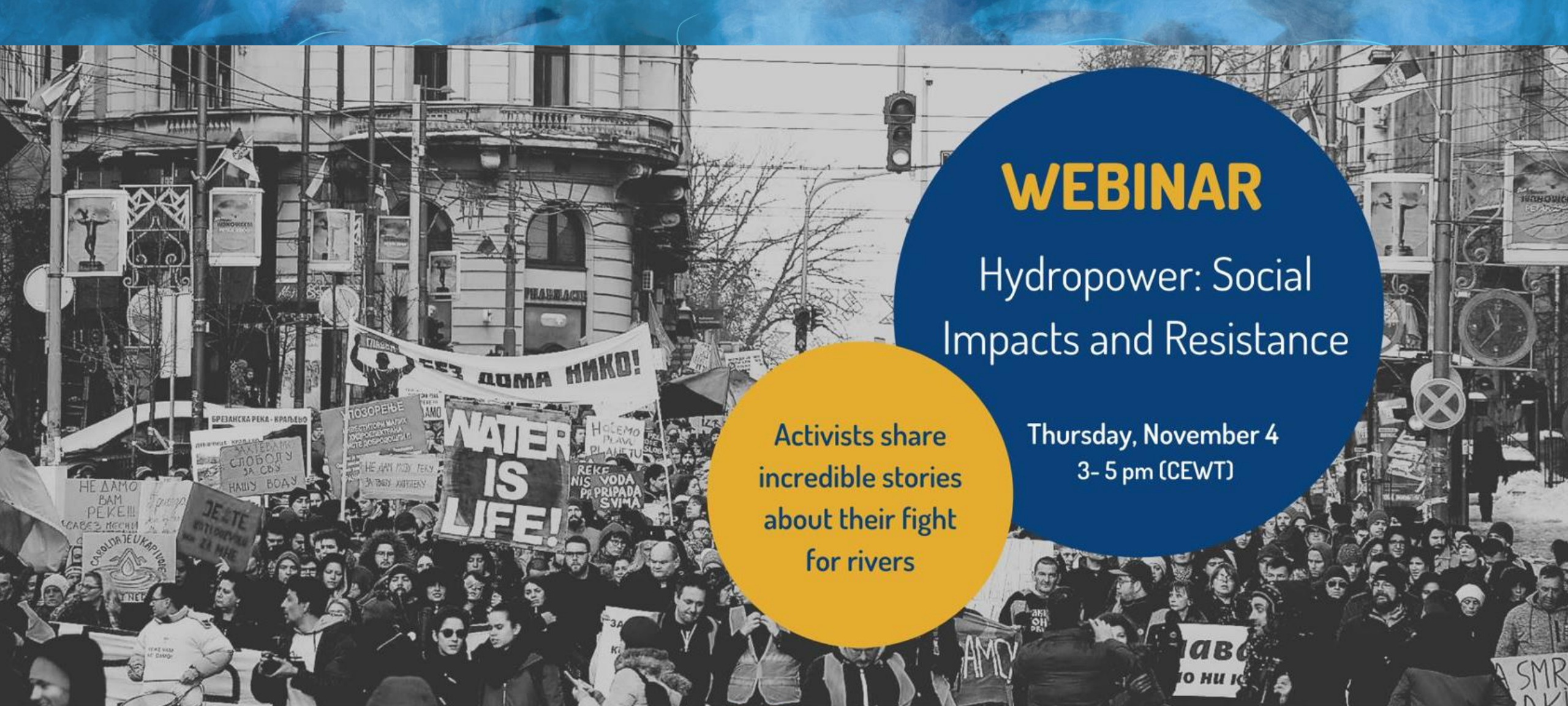
LandscapeProtection / Others

ADVANCED HYDRO POWER PLANT FILTER



Filter all Hydropower Plants by the currently activated **Protected Area** layers.





# WEBINAR

## Hydropower: Social Impacts and Resistance

Thursday, November 4  
3- 5 pm (CEWT)

Activists share  
incredible stories  
about their fight  
for rivers

**euRONATUR**



**RiverWatch**

© Radomir Duvnjak





## Save the Blue Heart of Europe

★ 5,0 (27) · Gemeinnützige Organisation



Registrieren

balkanrivers.net

14.091 Personen gefällt das

Startseite

Shop

Info

Beiträge

Fotos

Live

Info

Änderungen vorschlagen

<https://balkanrivers.net/>

[Nachricht senden](#)

[Gemeinnützige Organisation · Guter Zweck](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/blueheartrivers/>

The Balkan region is the last large area in Europe where rivers are still rather unimpaired. The incredibly beautiful network of water – including secluded gorges, crystal clear rivers and creeks, alluvial forest, spectacular waterfalls, and even some river dolphins – has remained relatively unknown to the public.



blueheartrivers



579  
Posts

1,886  
Followers

117  
Following

Save the Blue Heart of Europe

Gemeinnützige Organisation

Saving Europe's last wild rivers from a hydropower tsunami.

From Riverwatch and @euronaturorg

See Translation

[balkanrivers.net/en/instagram](https://balkanrivers.net/en/instagram)



Followed by [vjosa\\_albania](#),  
[klodian\\_skrame\\_geohazard](#) and 20 others

Following

Message

Contact



Your support



Science Bus...



Fish study



VJOSA



SAN



Berlin, Germany







Keep a steady pace

Reinvent yourself





save the  
**blue**  
**heart**  
of europe





# Save the blue heart of Europe – The Case of Vjosa River –







# Threatened by 45 HPPs





1100 species identified





2 species new to Science



















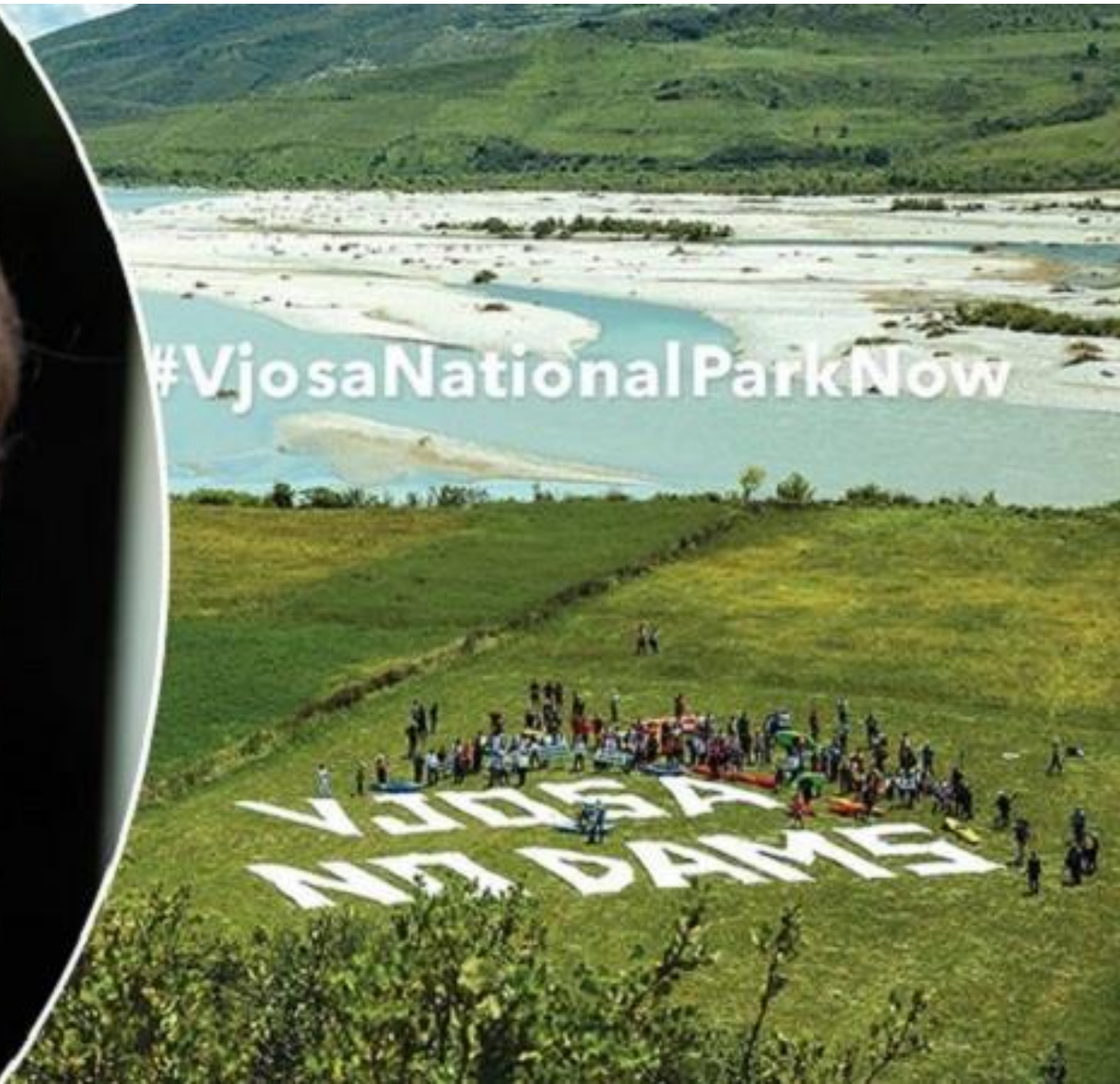














**776 Scientists signed a petition in support the Vjosa campaign**





# VJOSA RESEARCH CENTER "FRITZ SCHIEMER"







# Main achievements

**Stopped 2 HPPs in the Vjosa river – Poçem & Kalivaç. Legal battle continues for the tributaries**

**Case opened by the Bern Convention against the Albanian Government and Case filed to the Energy Community**

**94 % of Albanian public supports the vision for a Vjosa National Park**

**Made Vjosa an international issue with the support of our international partners and great support of Patagonia**

**OUR FINAL GOAL:**

**Declare the Vjosa National Park – Europe's 1st wild river national park**







## Official Proposal for a Vjosa National Park



# Vjosa

Europe's 1<sup>st</sup> Wild River National Park





# Vjosa National Park Now

---



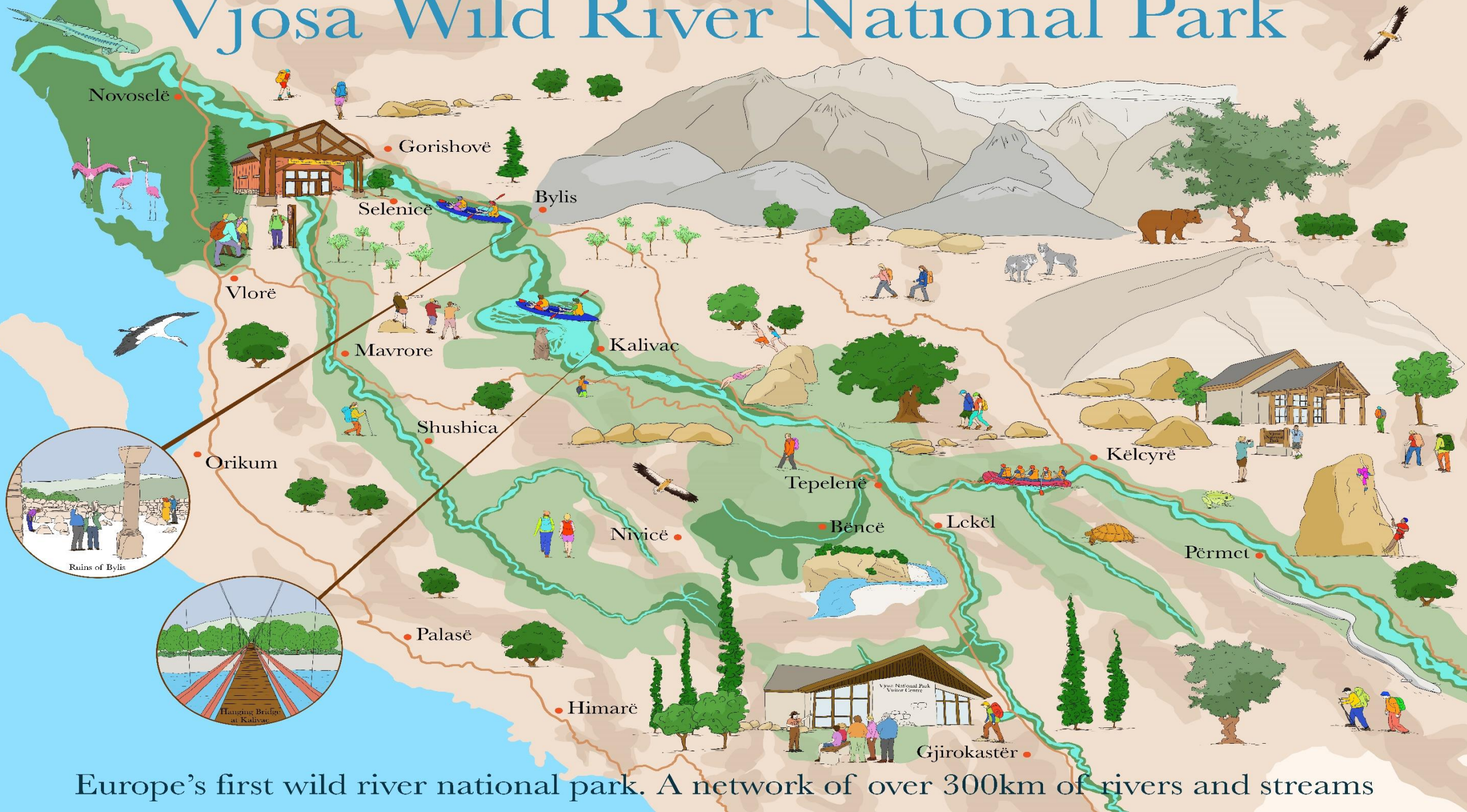








# Vjosa Wild River National Park



Europe's first wild river national park. A network of over 300km of rivers and streams



# Vjosa National Park, the only way to save Vjosa - a better future for local communities



 EcoAlbania started this petition to Prime Minister of Albania

The last wild river in Europe is in danger and National Park status is the only level of protection that can save it. After a

33,374 have signed. Let's get to 35,000!



At 35,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the **top signed on Change.org!**



Jonida Zguro signed this petition



enri thaci signed 8 minutes ago



Maria Dengu signed 9 minutes ago



First name

Last name

Email



☐ Yes! Tell me if this helps other relevant



The background of the slide is a stylized, isometric illustration of a winding blue river. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right, with several loops and turns. Along the banks of the river, there are small, dark brown patches of soil, each topped with a cluster of green, rounded trees. The entire scene is set against a light beige, textured background that resembles sand or a dry riverbed. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on natural elements.

THANK YOU