

18th Meeting of the Working Group on the Integrated Water Resources Management under the Water Convention

Geneva, Switzerland 19-21 June 2023

Respected organisers of this Meeting, respected representatives of all countries, colleges, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a honor and a pleasure to be here and to attend such a significant event.

My name is Enis Gjokaj, and I am here as a secretary of the Montenegrin Commission for Water Management Relations with the Republic of Albania.

On the begining i use the oportunity to congratulate all new countries (Cameroon, Namibia, Nigeria, and Iraq) for became a Parties of the Water Convention.

Through Montenegro and Republic of Albania there are 4 contact points related to Transboundary Water Cooperation:

- Shkodra-Scadar Lake,
- Buna-Bojana river,
- Cemi-Cijevna river and
- Grncar river.

Montenegro has launched an intermediary iniciative-legal and technical advice of the water Convention to the Implementation Committee under Advisory Procedure WAT-IC-AC-1 regarding the construction of small Hidro Power Plants in Cemi-Cijevna river, in Albanian territory. Till now there are built 3 of them and are in planing to built 3 more small hydro power plants: Tamara, Koznja 1 and Koznja 2. For planned small hydro power plants we recived documentation but only after environmental impact assesment was done.

Montenegro's aspiration is to be included in the whole process, from the start to the end of the process, so that Montenegrin institutions can give their opinion or observation regarding of the small hydro power plants in Cemi-Cijevna river. The albanian Party has pledged to do so in the coming period.

There is a Framework Agreement, signed in 2018 in Shkodra, between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and Council of Ministers of the

Republic of Albania, which obliged both Parties to inform each other and involve two Parties, where a negative impact can be expected.

Montenegro and Republic of Albania have very good neighbourly relations. We collaborate together in all areas. In the field of Water management, since 2003, there has been signed an Agreement and then in 2010 the Agreement on emergency measures for regulation of the Buna-Bojana river, in the year when Montenegro and Republic of Albania were hit by floods.

As for the advisory process, We agreed with the proposed recommendations from the Implementation Committee. First was to establish a Joint technical working group which is established in 2022 and till now we organize 2 joint meetings in Albania, first meeting in Tamare, the area where are built small hydro power plants, on May 2022 and second meeting in Shkodra on 25 of April 2023. Those Joint Technical Working Groups are involved in continuity of all activities and are obliged to inform Commission for Water Relations between the two countries about their activities. In the second meeting where participated also two representatives of the Implementation Committee, Mr Ivan Zavadsky and Mr Pedro Cugna de Serra.

The conclusion of those meetings was that countries have to establish monitoring system and prepare some document (Protocol, Platform, Policy or something like that-it doesn't matter the name of documents, it is important content of this document and to be measurable) which have to explain the way of communication and data exchange information about parameters which have to be decided between two Parties in next period. Just to note that in Montenegrin territory river Cemi-Cijevna is a protected area-Monument of nature, where in addition of Water management environmental protection have also to play a significant role.

On March 2023, when we received recommendations from the Implementation Committee which steps to take forward, we also received from them a certain documents on mutual regulation of rights and obligations on the exchange of data and information.

We have considered the obtained documentation, so I hope that in the near future we will come to a common solution establishing a system of monitoring data and information exchange.

I would like also to take opportunity to sincerely thank the Implementation Committee for their efforts to resolve our dispute and who give as possibility to express our views as a today but not only.

Montenegro and Republic of Albania are left to sit on the table and define certain measurable parameters that will follow the further developments and analyse possible impact on water quality and quantity regarding to groundwater but also surface water. And of course, our intention is that those activities could be implemented through joint project, and we expect some financial assistance from international financial institution.

Montenegro believes that such and similar cases must be resolved through dialogue and cooperation to mutual satisfaction. If a monitoring system shall be established to monitor certain data for the Cemi-Cijevna River, such an approach could, of course be used for all contact points on water management between Montenegro and the Republic of Albania.

Thank you for your attention!