

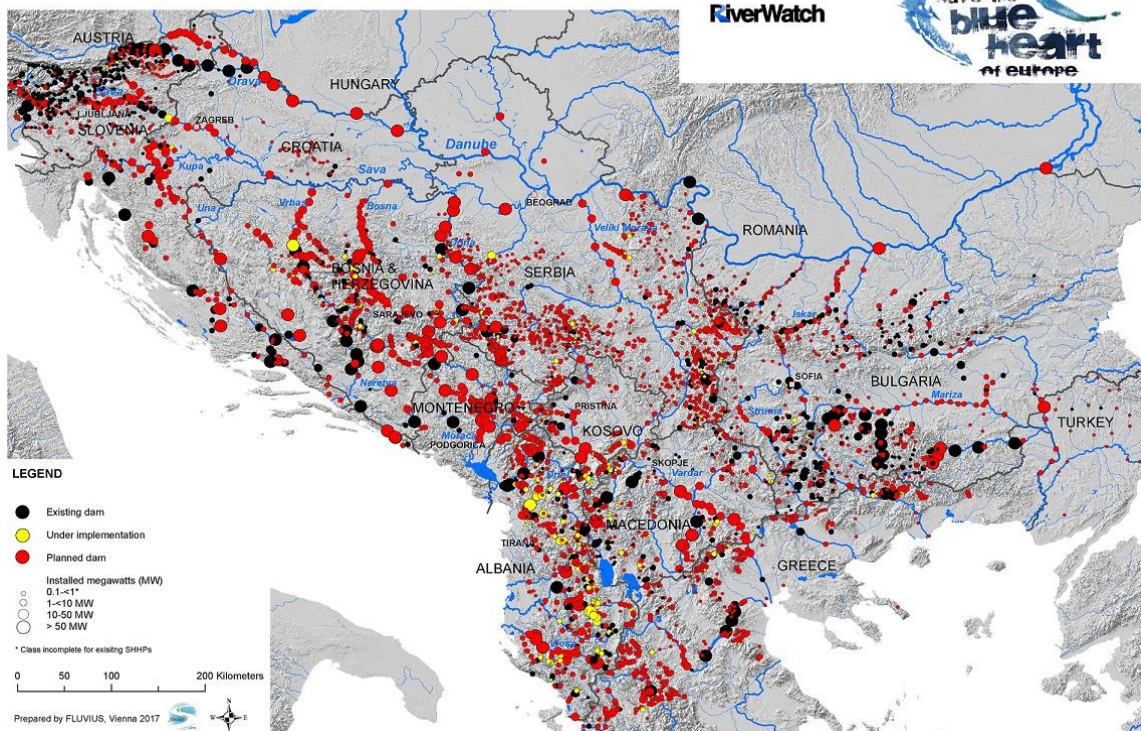


Data Series within the Campaign:

Hydropower Projects on Balkan Rivers

Data Update 2017

Hydropower plants in Balkan rivers



Prepared by

Ulrich Schwarz, Fluvius Vienna

for

euRONATUR

&

RiverWatch

Summary: Hydropower development in the Balkans - data update 2017

Every two years, we analyze the situation of hydropower development in the Balkans, updating the data of existing and planned hydropower plants as well as those currently under construction in the entire region. Moreover, we assess how many of these projects are located/planned in protected areas. After our last update in 2015, a new data update is now available. This unique data set makes the extent of the threat to the Blue Heart of Europe visible: our warnings are confirmed, the dam tsunami has started to roll.

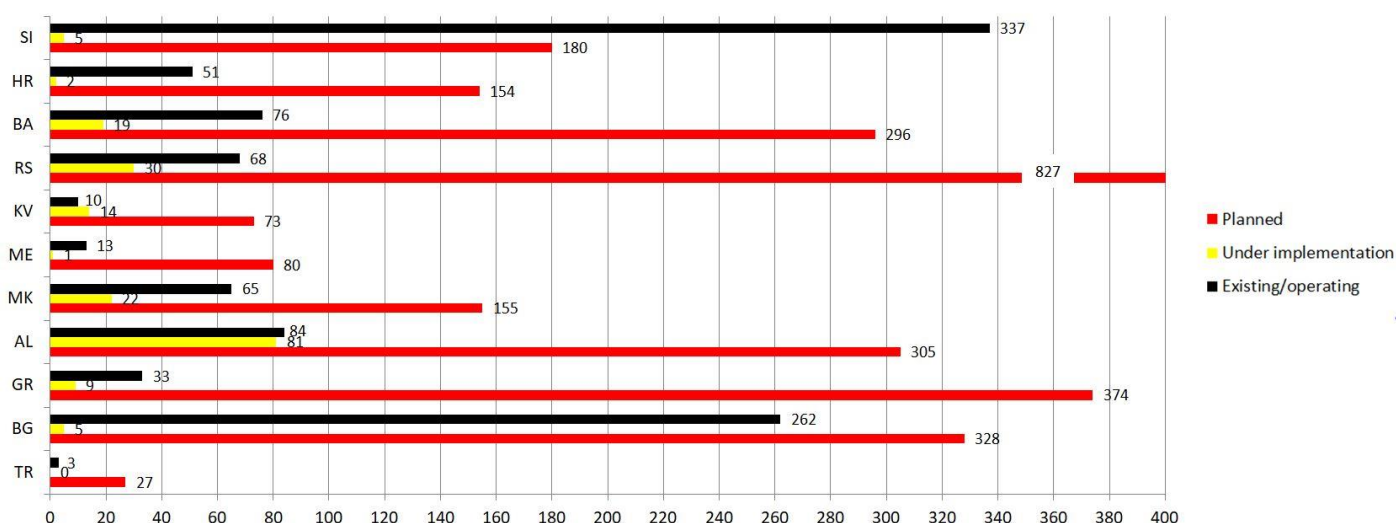
Results

Currently, 2,796 hydropower plants are in the planning phase, 188 are under construction, while another 1,004 plants are already operating. 1,031 (or 37%) of the planned dams are projected to be built in protected areas with high protection status (118 of which in national parks, 547 in Natura 2000 areas).

Comparing the latest update with our 2015 data shows that

- the speed of construction of new hydropower plants is increasing. Currently, 188 projects are under construction, while in 2015 it was only 61
- hotspots of ongoing river destruction is Albania (81 projects under construction), Serbia (30), Macedonia (22) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (19). Less projects are currently being pushed in Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro
- in the past 2 years, approximately 160-180 plants have been completed
- 91% of those under construction are projects with a planned installed capacity below 10 megawatts (MW) for which no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.
- practically all bigger plants under construction are being built in Albania: 10 out of 13 projects with capacities between 10-50 MW, and 2 out of 3 with capacities above 50 MW
- next to Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a future hotspots of dam construction will be Serbia in particular, where a total of 826 plants are projected.
-

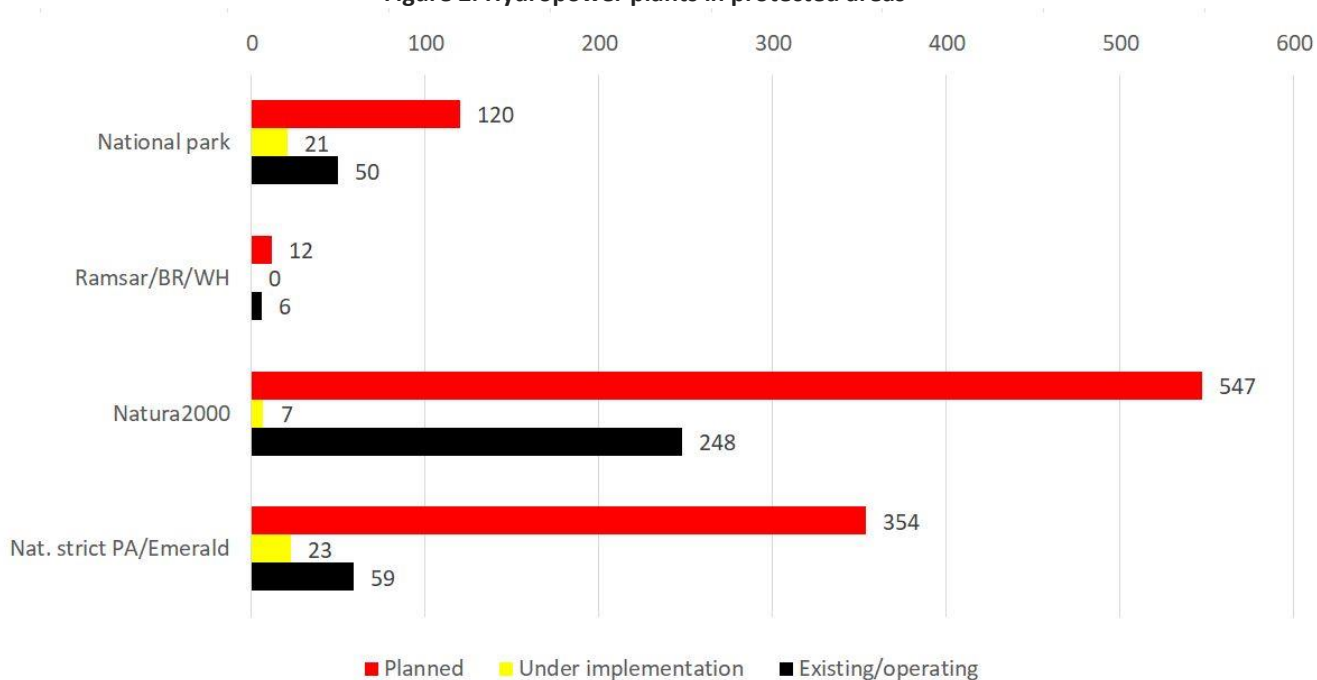
Figure 1. Hydropower plants by countries



Protected Areas

- Protected areas do not provide protection against hydropower plants; their protection status is being severely undermined. A total of 1,447 hydropower plants and projects are located within protected areas with high protection status (national parks, Natura 2000, national protected areas), of which
 - 1,031 are in the planning phase. In 2015, “only” 535 projects were planned in protected areas, so the number has doubled since
 - 51 are under construction
 - 365 are in operation
- National parks:** 118 projects are planned within national parks (2015: 113), 21 are under construction (!), 52 are in operation.
- Natura 2000:** 547 projects are planned within Natura 2000 areas (2015: 131), 7 are under construction, 248 are in operation. Natura 2000 is a network of EU protected areas, thus only the EU member states Slovenia, Croatia, Greece and Bulgaria have been taken into account. The significant increase of projects within this category is linked to improved data for Bulgaria compared to the 2015 data set.

Figure 2. Hydropower plants in protected areas



Method

The data update was conducted by the consultant FLUVIUS Floodplain Ecology and River Basin Management by means of intensive satellite imagery research, as well as data from national and international sources, company and bank websites, news articles, etc. With respect to power plants in protected areas it must be noted that only data on hydropower plants has been updated in the course of this analysis, and not that of protected areas. New protected areas which have been designated since 2015 are thus not included in this analysis. This means that the actual number of hydropower plants within protected areas is likely to be even higher.