

Statements of prominent Scientists for the Vjosa River



“Natural rivers provide valuable goods and services. As such they’re extremely important. Furthermore, they represent a natural heritage. Pristine rivers like the Vjosa should be preserved and not dammed!”

Prof. Robert J. Naiman

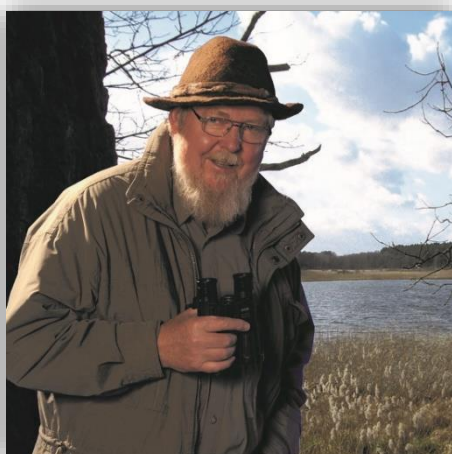
*University of Washington in Seattle, USA
Professor in Aquatic and Fishery Science; UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Rivers; Recipient of the Eminent Ecologist Award in 2012, awarded by the Ecological Society of America; Best known for his work in river ecology and riparian areas; High citation record; Author of several influential books, e.g. RIPARIA*



“Free-flowing rivers are becoming very rare and its fauna and flora endangered. Unique rivers like the Vjosa have to be preserved in its near to natural state.”

Prof. Klement Tockner

*Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries - IGB, Berlin, Germany
President of the Austrian Science Fund; Member of many international scientific institutions and research projects, among others OeAWI (Austria), ICRA (Spain), HCMR (Greece), NIES (Japan)*



“Climate change will have a particularly strong impact on Europe's river systems. Near-natural rivers can best adapt to this. It is therefore essential to protect Europe's last remaining intact rivers from human intervention.”

Prof. em. Dr. Michael Succow

Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University Greifswald; Michael Succow Foundation for the Protection of Nature, Germany; Most renowned environmental scientists of Germany; Deputy Minister for Nature Conservation, Ecology and Water Management of the GDR in 1990; Recipient of multiple honours such as the Honorary German Environmental Prize by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (2015); Order of Merit of the State of Brandenburg(2005) the First Class Order of Merit (Bundesverdienstkreuz) of Germany (2001); the URANIA Medaille for special merits inscientific education (2000) and the Right Livelihood Award/1997)



“Few large free-flowing rivers like the Vjosa are left in the world and safeguarding river connectivity is an essential action to maintain their health and address the alarming decline in freshwater biodiversity.”

Prof. Stuart E. Bunn

Australian Rivers Institute & Griffith University, Australia



“The construction of hydro power plants in the magnificent floodplain of the Vjosa River signifies investment in a technology, which is already today economically inferior in comparison with other renewable energy sources, at the costs of the multiple economic, ecological and social benefits of an intact river-floodplain system.”

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Junk

Federal University of Mato Grosso, Brazil

Among the leading river ecologists world wide due to his outstanding commitment to floodplain research; Retired Head of the Working Group Tropical Ecology of the Max-Planck-Institute for Limnology, Germany; Scientific Coordinator of the National Institute of Science and Technology of Wetlands (INCT-INAU) at Federal University of Mato Grosso, Cuiabá, (MT), Brazil; Recipient of international honors, such as the First Class Order of Merit (Bundesverdienstkreuz Erster Klasse) of Germany



“The Vjosa is so unique because it flows freely from one end to the other. Furthermore, the EU has asked us to protect the Vjosa. This request should be important to Albanian decision makers. The protection of the Vjosa would send a positive message to the EU and increases Albania’s chances for accession.”

Prof. Aleko Miho

University of Tirana, Albania



“Building a dam in the Vjosa basin is wrong, because the area is one of the most active seismic areas in Albania. Dams with large reservoirs would increase the risks for people that live downstream the dam.”

Prof. Klodian Skrame

Polytechnical University Tirana, Albania

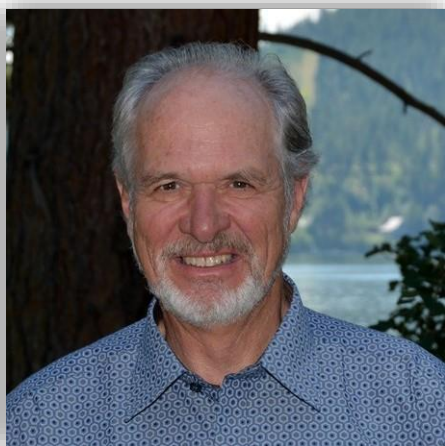


“At a time when dams are being removed from rivers to reinstate natural processes and the ecosystems they support and when naturally-functioning rivers are critically few in number, it is crucial that the proposals for the Vjosa river to be carefully reviewed. This is one of the incredibly small number of dynamic, naturally-functioning rivers to survive within Europe. It deserves a thorough scientific assessment before any major human interventions proceed.”

Prof. Angela M. Gurnell

Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom

Awards: 2002: Victoria Medal, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG); 2003: recognised as a ‘Pioneer in the life of the Nation’ by Queen Elizabeth II for contributions to river system management; 2012: Linton Medal, British Society for Geomorphology



“The Vjosa is one of the last, large free-flowing (undammed) rivers in Europe and therefore it is a fundamental resource for understanding how to naturalize and restore rivers that have been dammed.”

Prof. em. Jack A. Stanford

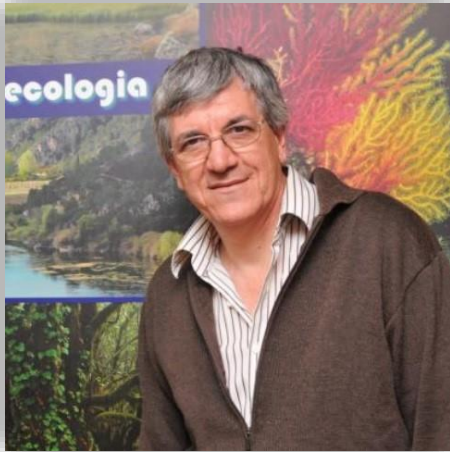
University of Montana, USA



"If you dam the extremely sediment-rich Vjosa, huge technical and economic problems will be an inevitable consequence – and not only in the area of the hydropower site but downstream and along the coastline as well, that's for sure."

Prof. Christoph Hauer

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna - BOKU, Austria



"If the Vjosa will be dammed, a unique ecosystem will disappear, without solving any crucial problems of their riverine communities (including man)."

Prof. Narcís Prat

Universitat de Barcelona, Spain



"I'm so concerned that we are at the brink of losing the only single wild river in Albania. How can one repair a broken river if no reference of an intact river system is left to study? We won't have a solution if we lose the Vjosa now."

Prof. Ferdinand Bego

University of Tirana, Albania



“I do not agree to sacrifice one of Europe's most beautiful river landscapes on the altar of unsustainable development.”

Dr. Nikolaos Skoulidakis

Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece



“Dynamics and connectivity are the heart of healthy rivers and dams ruin them.”

Prof. Futoshi Nakamura

Hokkaido University, Japan



“Preserving the Vjosa will be appreciated for future generations as an homage to river biodiversity and a memory of what European rivers used to be before being dammed.”

Prof. Sergi Sabater

Institute of Aquatic Ecology & Catalan Institute for Water Research, Spain



“Free-flowing rivers are becoming one of the rarest natural commodities in the world, especially in the northern hemisphere, and we need to do all we can to protect the Vjosa for itself and future generations.”

Prof. James H. Thorp, Ph.D.

University of Kansas, USA

Further Supporting Scientists



Prof. Friedrich Schiemer

University of Vienna



Prof. Gabriel Singer

IGB, Berlin, Germany



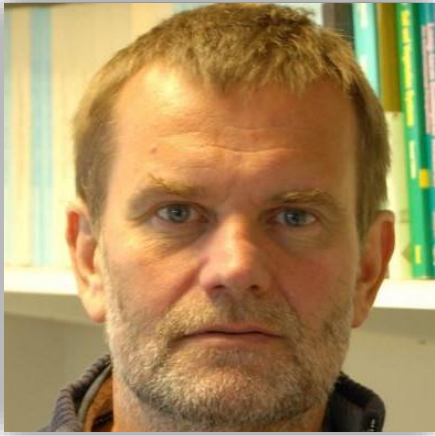
Prof. Guido Zolezzi,
University of Trento, Italy



Prof. Steven Weiss,
University of Graz, Austria



Prof. Bernhardt Wehrli
Professor for Aquatic Chemistry at the Department of
Environmental Sciences
at ETH Zurich, Switzerland



Prof. Gilles Pinay

*National Research Institute of Science and Technology for Environment and Agriculture, Antony (IRSTEA), France
Research Director Centre national de la recherche scientifique(CNRS); Director of Environmental Observatory of Rennes (OSUR) Internationally leading expert on riverine nutrient cycles*

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