

Balkan Rivers News



Dear Friends of the Balkan Rivers,

Lots of things have happened since our last newsletter, the campaign is picking up and reputable media such as The Guardian, BBC or Aljazeera have delivered our stories to the public. Here are the highlights:

* Study confirms: The Heart of the Huchen beats on the Balkans

On March 19, we presented a study about the distribution and threats of Huchen on the Balkans in Ljubljana ([photos](#)). 18 experts from 7 countries were involved. 93 hydropower plants are projected directly in stretches with healthy Huchen populations. Experts predict a population decline of up to 70%, if these dams become reality. [More](#)

Media coverage: [BBC](#), [Aljazeera Balkan](#), [RTV4](#), [DELO](#), [DW](#), [Der Standard](#)



Huchen. Photo: A. Hartl

* Vjosa at a Crossroad - Dam Tsunami or National Park?

In mid-March, we presented a paper in Tirana which for the first time revealed the full extent of the threat to the Vjosa catchment. According to this paper, the last big wild river of Europe is at risk of complete destruction. [More](#)

Media coverage: [Aljazeera Balkan](#), [Top Channel](#), [TravelMagazine](#), [Der Standard](#), [VOA](#)



Vjosa River. Photo: Bledi Hoxha

* Vjosa Tour continued: Friends of Vjosa

We continued our Vjosa Tour of public discussions in southern Albania. Over 200 residents attended our meetings in Tepelena and Selenica, enthusiastically supporting our vision of a Vjosa National Park (see the [video](#)). A "Friends of Vjosa" initiative was established. The Tour will end with a Vjosa Day in Tirana on May 30th. [More](#)



Vjosa Tour event in Selenica, Albania. Photo: Ben Andoni

*** Vjosa: Tirana Times Interview**

In February, the Tirana Times published an interview with Ulrich Eichelmann about the Vjosa River, its threats, the alternative idea of a Vjosa National Park and the Blue Heart of Europe campaign. [More](#)

*** Mavrovo: Is EBRD pulling out?**

In February, the newspaper *The Guardian* published a detailed report about the situation of the Balkan Rivers. In it, the newspaper reports that the EBRD is likely to pull out of hydro project in the Mavrovo National Park in Macedonia, one of our key areas in the campaign. [More](#)

*** Save The Date: Balkan Rivers Conference**

We are happy to inform you about the Balkan Rivers Conference in September 2015 – the first event of this kind in Europe! Please mark the dates in your calendar and spread the word! It will be a first get-together of river NGOs, initiatives, anti-dam movements, fishermen and other river lovers from all over the Balkans and elsewhere. [More](#)

All the best,

Your Blue Heart Team

TIRANA TIMES - FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 8, 2015 | 7 Q&A

Protecting Vjosa, Europe's last wild river

In an interview, Ulrich Eichelmann, CEO of Riverwatch and coordinator of 'Save the Blue Heart of Europe' campaign, explained why Albanians should protect the Vjosa River, one of Europe's last untouched natural beauties.



Interviewed by BEN ANDONI

more you destroy the more money you can earn. That is nothing new, but in our

It's doubtful about it, between Slovenia and Albania, we have the best rivers of the

outstanding for Europe. Therefore the first European Wild River National Park would

Hydropower Balkan dam boom threatens Europe's last wild waterways

Environmental concerns have pushed one flagship dam project to the brink of cancellation but a 'gold rush on the rivers' of south-east Europe puts these unique ecosystems and their wildlife, including the critically endangered Balkan lynx, in jeopardy



Arthur Neslen in Mavrovo, Përmet and Tepelena

Friday 20 February 2015 10:02 GMT

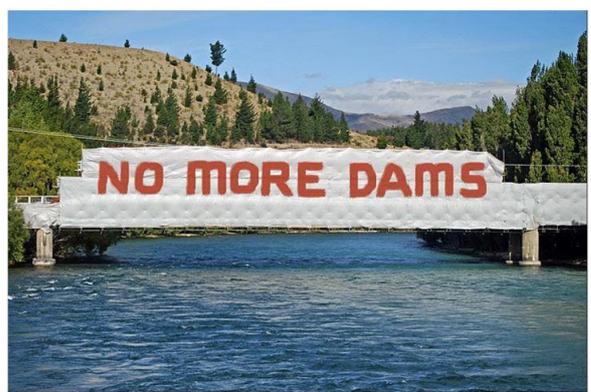



Photo: International Rivers