



A DIALOGUE AND POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN BELGRADE AND PRISTINA ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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A dialogue and possibilities for cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina on environmental protection

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2022 brought a handful of challenges and shook the global security, economic and energy order. As a result, these disruptions, as well as the impetus to boost the economy in the post-covid era, created even greater pressures on ecosystems through increased exploitation of environmental resources, and therefore increased pollution emissions globally.

Despite the optimism that appeared at the beginning of 2022 due to the easing of measures against COVID19, the world soon entered a state of general insecurity with the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Consequently, geopolitical interests, the creation and strengthening of political and security alliances have created global economic and energy challenges that have had various negative effects on developed and developing countries. But what we can already conclude is that the Western Balkans are unprepared to ensure energy security not only for the economy, but also for the basic needs of citizens.

In addition to the mentioned critical events, which, although unprecedented in this generation (COVID19, war events in Ukraine), the world, and especially the European continent, was gripped by the most intense heat wave with minimal precipitation. All the largest rivers in Europe are recording historic minimum water levels, and water ecosystems are at the highest level of threat in recent history. Nevertheless, this news did not cause public attention and concern in the circumstances of the war events in Eastern Europe and the fear of the spread of the conflict.

Complex challenges marked the year 2022, where the resilience of the system emerged, and the impossibility of even the richest countries in Europe to ignore their own policies and rules in the blink of an eye, created in the face of a threat to energy security, and to resurrect the abandoned dirty energy sources and technologies. Among other things, we are witnessing the failure of several decades of global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If globally there is no turn towards global cooperation for the benefit of humanity, if the gods of war are not appeased, instead of cooperation in the field of environmental protection, nations will enter the phase of an even greater struggle for the control of the remaining natural resources with increased exploitation and an even greater degree of environmental degradation. In such geopolitical circumstances and in conditions of climate change, control over natural resources will be imperative for the survival of nations, and the environment itself can be used as a weapon or as a reason to start some new conflicts.

THE STATE OF ENVIRONMENT

The quality of water (surface and underground), air, and soil is directly correlated with the economic standard. The infrastructural, ecological, geographical, and legal heritage of Kosovo is significantly connected with Serbia, which was not erased by the unilateral declaration of independence. Bearing in mind the interdependence of the systems and common resources of Serbia and Kosovo, as well as the high level of ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians, it can be concluded that the reasons for degradation and inadequate use of environmental resources may also be a reason for some future disagreements.

In order to eliminate the risks that different types of pollution can cause between Serbia and Kosovo, it is necessary to define the current problems. In addition to the cause, location and type of pollution or impact, it is necessary to investigate the way pollution is transported, that is, to define the area on which certain pollution has an impact. Although this action algorithm seems simple, in the circumstances of undefined political jurisdiction over the territories where pollution occurs or where they cause the greatest damage, solutions to the problem of pollution in transit are a challenge.

A dialogue and possibility for cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina on environmental protection

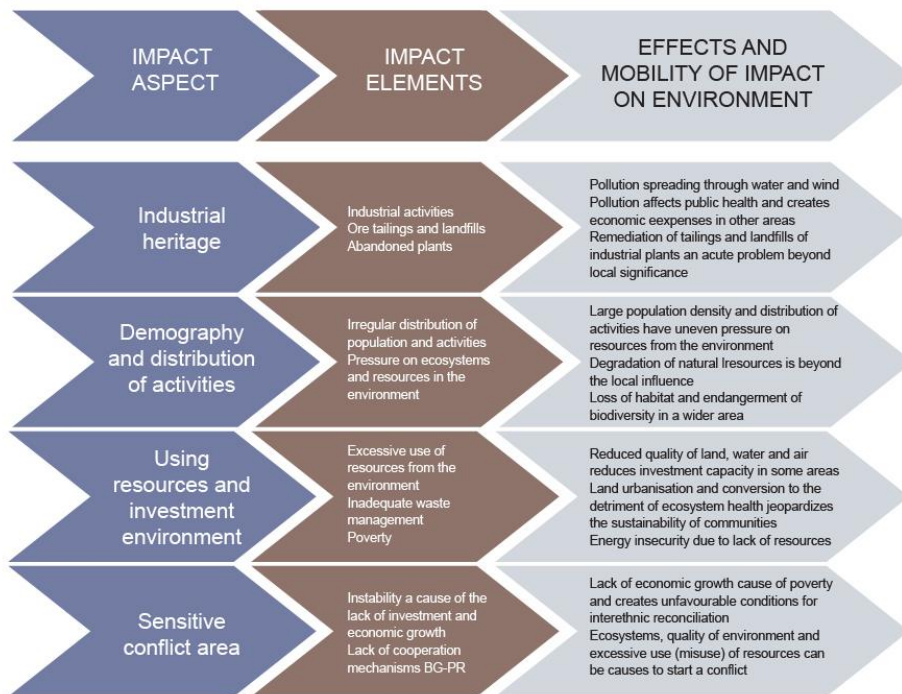


Figure 1. Interdependence and impact of the system on the environment

AIR

Although there are acute problems related to air quality, they are mostly local or regional and have a limited effect outside the administrative entities managed by the authorities in Belgrade or Pristina. Air pollution in this sense does not represent a problem that one party can abuse to the detriment of the other party to a significant extent. Still, despite the limited influence and distribution of economic activities and settlements, there are significant opportunities in this field that can be exploited in order to improve cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo.

Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. The region of the Western Balkans is not in the focus of global initiatives and mechanisms to combat climate change because this region has a small population and relatively minor economic activity. Proof of this is the scarce data and information base not only in terms of CO₂ emissions but also other aspects in the sphere of environmental quality preservation (control and measurement of pollution emissions in water, air and soil, open databases, pollutant cadastre, etc.).

Looking at the data presented, it can be concluded that the problems of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the Western Balkans are not at all alarming. Based on these indicators, and from the perspective of the principles of environmental protection, a heretical assumption can be made that in the Western Balkans, *a higher emission of greenhouse gases is preferable*, if it would contribute to the business and economic development of the region. Although such a proposal is illogical from the point of view of the fight against climate change, it is necessary to achieve the goals of economic development, which would consequently positively affect stability in this turbulent region. In other words, economic growth should have priority, and it will inevitably in the foreseeable future provide the necessary financial and technological resources needed to create and implement zero CO₂ emission measures (most European countries have committed to 2050).

There is room for cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina in the fight against climate change, but cooperation in that area is not of critical importance. Economic cooperation and infrastructural connectivity will create favorable conditions for reducing CO₂ emissions in the long term. The focus should be placed on forms of cooperation that promote energy efficiency in production and distribution, but also the competitiveness of the regional economy and business on the global stage. Progress in this direction is being implemented, especially in terms of improving the traffic infrastructure, opening the labor market and services. Digitization and modern technologies represent a great chance for developing countries and can create mechanisms that will define responsibility and thus have an impact on democratic processes. By raising the quality of the information base and the transparency of data on the state and quality of the environment, political responsibility would be defined, and in that way environmental problems would be the subject of political processes. A standardized information base would create rivalry between the people and their leaders in the Balkans in implementing the goals of the green agenda with more effective strategies, a better legal framework and financing method.

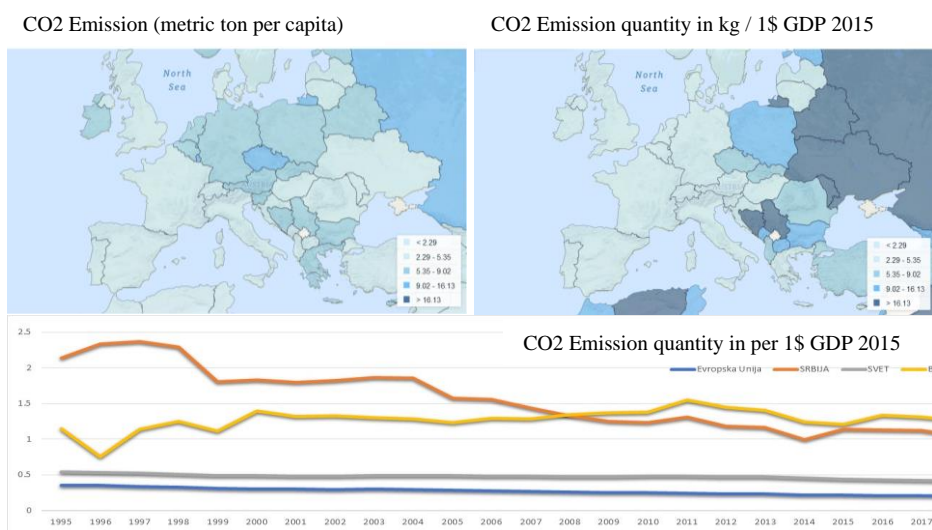


Figure 2. CO₂ emissions in Europe. Source: World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org>

Air pollution. Unlike CO₂ emissions, particle and gas emissions pose a direct threat to public and ecosystem health. Air pollution from emissions includes the emission of particles (PM), carbon monoxide (toxic), SO_x (sulfur dioxide and trioxide), NO_x (nitrates and nitrites), ammonia and methane (biodegradation of organic matter), dangerous organic vapors, and even dust raised from the ground (especially from ore tailings). Air pollution can also be created by meteorological conditions with strong winds so that dust particles from the contaminated area are emitted into the air currents and thereby contaminate the wider area.



Figure 3. Air quality [breezometer.com](https://www.breezometer.com) Im. 1 - Nov 2021, Im. 2 - Aug 2022, Im. 3 - Oct 2022

Air pollution is a problem of inadequate distribution of economic activities and distribution of settlements, as well as a problem of the lack of economic power to use better technologies. By comparison, Serbia has an emission of 6.7 Mt/per capita CO₂, and Germany 7.9 Mt/per capita CO₂. This means that the poor air quality in the Balkans in Image 1 is not caused by higher gas emissions, but rather by poor emission filtering technologies and the availability of types of energy sources.

However, the greater part of air pollution that has a toxic nature affects environments in the immediate vicinity of the emission of pollution and with different climatic conditions. The same air pollution emissions create different air quality conditions in the winter and summer periods, and the air pollution images here best illustrate that. In this respect, at least in the short term, the existing air pollution does not represent a major threat to interethnic relations between Albanians and Serbs. However, if technologies are not improved and existing practices continue, there is a real risk that interethnic relations will deteriorate in relation to this area.

Although there is a clear correlation in the region between air pollution and increased incidence of diseases, especially respiratory, it is almost impossible to record relevant data that would prove this correlation. In Kosovo, there is an acute problem of air pollution from the power plants in Obilić, in the immediate vicinity of which almost 1/3 of the population of Kosovo is located, with a proportional representation of all ethnic groups (the Serb community in the municipality of Gračanica and the villages around Obilić and Vučitrn, the Albanian community in all municipalities, including Priština).

Adverse effects of air pollution on the environment can create an (informal) form of cooperation in the health sector. There are examples in which Albanians from Kosovo seek adequate medical assistance in hospitals in Belgrade and other major cities in Serbia. The decision of Kosovo Albanians to seek treatment in Serbia is personal and rational, guided by the motive of the fastest healing and adequate care. The level of trust achieved through the treatment of Albanians in Belgrade is of great value and is insufficiently exploited in the field of interethnic and inter-institutional cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo.

In terms of air quality control, there is certainly room for cooperation even in the conditions of the current energy crisis. The proposal of the President of the Republic of Serbia on the exchange of lignite for electricity was a great opportunity for cooperation in which Pristina would benefit more. Namely, by exporting lignite, Kosovo would also export air pollution, and in return it would receive excess electricity that it does not have the capacity to produce in the thermal power plants in Obilić.

There is also room for air quality monitoring and the creation of gas emission inventory databases organized according to the methodology of the European Environmental Agency, although one should not be fooled that at this moment it is possible to implement a system that is completely transparent. The reason has already been mentioned in the opportune cost

of energy insecurity and the reduced level of investment in relation to improving the quality of the environment. But even so, the collection and exchange of air quality data between Serbia and Kosovo (and others from the Western Balkans) can have positive effects both in the short and long term.

Preservation of the environment and the fight against climate change is becoming more and more a political issue, and today it has the power to be a key element in the fight for citizens' votes in electoral processes. Hence, there is room for cooperation at the level of political parties and movements that tie their engagement to the green agenda, principles of sustainable development and similar topics, but certainly also at the level of civil society organizations that are active in these fields.

LAND

Land is a limited (fixed) resource very sensitive to surrounding influences and activities, whether natural disasters or human influence. Simply put, we can say that there are three main causes of soil quality disturbances that have the potential to affect the relations between Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans:

1. Stress on ecological systems due to changes in land use (economy, agriculture, industry, urbanization...)
2. Industrial heritage (legacy of past industrialization)
3. Loss of biodiversity and habitats due to excessive exploitation of environmental resources (forestry, water management, agriculture, mining, etc.).

These three aspects describe some significant local activities that may have regional or even international consequences. Soil pollution and even land use change can create economic and ecological problems over long distances where the mechanisms of pollution mobility are mainly water and air, but the mechanism can also be combined. Particles of air pollution or direct contamination of the soil with pollution are transformed due to precipitation or spilling into watercourses, thus watercourses contaminate areas far from the location of the origin of the contamination. The wind has a similar mechanism to particle pollution, but the transport of pollution by this route is still limited. The meteorological and climatic conditions of the Balkans are linked so that the associated hydrological mechanisms and wind roses have the ability to transport local activities and pollution over long distances. As in terms of air quality, the impact can be mutual, but taking into account the geographical characteristics of the terrain, hydrology and distribution of settlements and activities, in this case the causes of the problem are mostly in Kosovo.

Planning and construction in urban areas since the arrival of the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo in 1999 until today have a constant trend

of growth. High population density and urbanization have created increased pressure on all systems, and even on agricultural production. The conversion of agricultural land into construction land in Kosovo has increased dependence on imports of food and other agricultural products. Proof of this is the effects of the 100% tax on products from Serbia, which was adopted by the government of Ramush Haradinaj in November 2018.



Figure 4. Village/settlement Čaglavica, today the suburbs of the city of Priština

Figure 4 shows the development of a settlement at the expense of agricultural land in the immediate vicinity of Pristina. At the same time, it also shows the trend of spatial planning, which not only changes its purpose, but also shows the scale of influence in other aspects that urbanization brings, pressures on water resources, problems with wastewater and solid waste management. In this specific case that the figure shows, there are also problems of population concentration in a location that is threatened by the negative impacts of air pollution from TPP Kosovo A and Kosovo B in Obilić, which means an increased risk to public health.

For the sake of objectivity, inadequate waste management, although mostly located in Kosovo, in case of the Ibar River is a significant example of the transport of pollution towards Kosovo. Sanitary landfills in the territories of Rožaje (Mostina) and in the municipality of Tutin pollute the river Ibar, which fills Lake Gazivode with water. Although in terms of concentration and types of pollution, this contamination has a smaller impact on water quality and public health, regardless, this problem must be put on the same level as other problems that must be solved.

Industrial heritage, i.e., hotspots and concentrations of pollution from abandoned industrial and existing energy plants have a significant impact on regional, and even international relations. This type of pollution migrates mainly from Kosovo to other areas and is almost exclusively located in the Ibar-Danube basin. These hotspots represent a local threat to human health and soil quality, but also an international threat because they threaten the health of aquatic ecosystems and agricultural production in the areas downstream

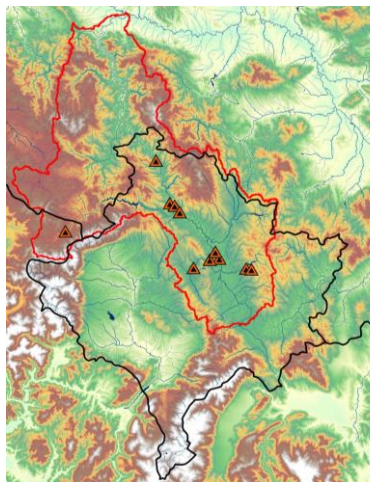


Figure 5. Pollution hotspots in the Ibar Basin

from the hotspots. In the past few decades, several studies and analyses of water and soil quality have been carried out, which indicate the extent of the impact these hotspots have on the wider area. Although these analyses are valuable, with a lot of information, the methodology of work and sample collection is not comprehensive, that is, there are no elements of cooperation and consensus in the way of data collection and processing in order to identify problems and causes in the field. In order to eliminate the negative impacts that have the potential to threaten the already bad interethnic relations, it is necessary to analyse the state and impact of these hotspots and create a cadastre of pollutants in all other areas that exceed the local impact. This analysis would thus represent the basis for the development of an action plan of activities and an analysis of the investment plan for the removal of threats to the environment and public health in the region.

The bad bio-chemical characteristics of water in the period before 1999 were mostly influenced by industrial waste, while the influence of untreated wastewater today is more pronounced.

The last major threat to the relations between Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans is the excessive exploitation of environmental resources. High population density, urbanization and economic growth have created pressure on ecosystems outside of populated areas. In the past few decades, there has been an increase in the trend of exploitation of forests and stone aggregates for the construction industry, illegal exploitation and trade of forests and lignite for firewood, water and water resources for energy, agricultural production and industry, etc. As a result, these trends threaten the ecosystem, wildlife habitats and biodiversity. The change in the composition and purpose of the land also affects the microclimate and hydrological characteristics, and in this respect the loss of the forest area shows its negative effects even today.

Forests store and conserve water and protect the soil from erosion, so the reduction of the area under forests has changed the hydrological characteristics of certain areas in the region. In the past few years, we have witnessed unprecedented torrential floods, which over time become a seasonal phenomenon in the plains and create environmental and economic problems. In addition, the loss of forests endangers habitats and the health of the ecosystem, thus causing the disappearance of many species, some of which are on the EU red list (wild cat, brown bear, wolf, grouse, etc.). Bearing in mind that ecological habitats do not know the barriers of administrative units, this problem concerns all actors, so cooperation is necessary at all levels, and it is recommended to build cooperation from lower to higher instances (e.g., from hunting associations to the competent ministry).

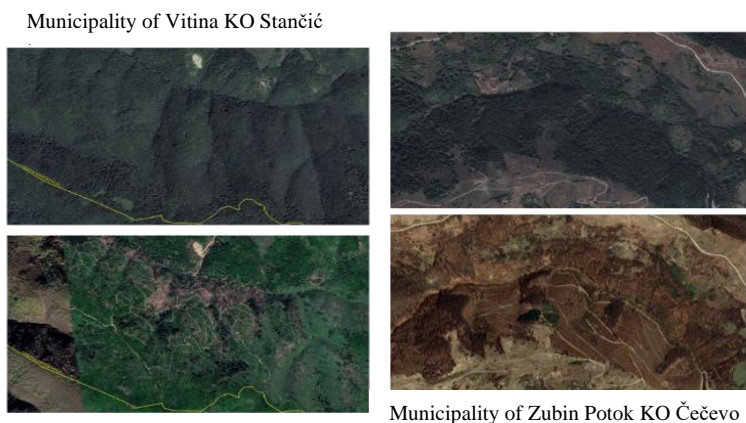


Figure 6. The loss of forest areas in the north and south of Kosovo

Ecology and environmental problems are becoming a framework of values that have an increasingly significant influence on political processes and shape the investment environment everywhere in the world, and in our country. In this regard, the field of environmental protection is an ideal space for cooperation and can be a catalyst for the creation of policies, initiatives, building value systems and leaders outside the administrative framework of nations and states. Although there are some forms of cooperation and mechanisms supported by international institutions, ownership, and responsibility for achieved goals must be national. In this sense, we should strive, that is, put pressure on political leaders and national budgets to form cooperation mechanisms.

WATER

The causes and origins of water pollution have already been elaborated in this document, so in this segment we will not further deal with the wide range of water pollution problems that are under the local jurisdictions (wastewater, industry, agriculture, etc.). Instead, we will deal with water problems in this part of another critical aspect of water resources, which is the (in)availability of water, i.e., the irrational or excessive use of water resources from the common basin. Confirmation of the importance of this topic in the relations between Belgrade and Pristina is point 7 of the Washington Agreement, which provides for the preparation of a feasibility study *“with the aim of joint use of Lake Gazivode as a reliable source of water and energy supply”*.

Water is a sensitive resource and necessary for the sustainability of all systems. In the conditions of already evident climate changes and under the pressure of economic systems dependent on growth, the quality and availability of water will represent a major challenge in the region and may pose a threat to regional stability.

There are two factors that affect the amount of available water. One is the hydrological potential of the area, and the other is the population, that is, the population density of the area where the water resource is shared. The basin of the Ibar River belongs to the group of stressed water resources on both grounds, but more based on population density.

According to the adopted methodology and indicators from the forum on natural resources in 1989 (Falkenmark, Malin, Lundqvist, & Widstrand, 1989), the threshold of stressed and sustainable microunits in terms of available water from renewable sources is 1700m³/inhabitant/day. In terms of this methodology, part of the Ibar basin in the area of central Kosovo (municipalities: Pristina, Kosovo Polje, Obilić and Vučitrn) due to low water availability and high population density, belongs to the micro-unit of crisis areas with limited amounts of water. The website “world water”

(www.worldwater.io) according to the same methodology interactively displays the areas of the world facing water shortages where the extent of the water shortage problems in Kosovo today and in the future can be clearly determined. What Figure 7 shows is that the Ibar basin is very stressed and unfavourable in terms of creating sustainable development. Figure 7 also illustrates an unfavorable investment environment in an already poor region, which in conditions of complete absence of cooperation leads to the strengthening of motives for controlling the remaining water resources and such a trend inevitably leads to conflicts and further escalation of the situation.

In Kosovo, the highest population density and the highest concentration of industrial activities is in the Ibar river basin in central Kosovo. At the same time, the White Drim basin has a negligibly small concentration of industry and the highest degree of runoff. Such an unbalanced distribution of activities and settlements, which are the main generators of water demand, was inherited from the time of the SFRY and is mainly a consequence of trends formed after the construction of the Ibar-Lepenac hydro system at the end of the 20th century, which is still the only material basis for economic development.

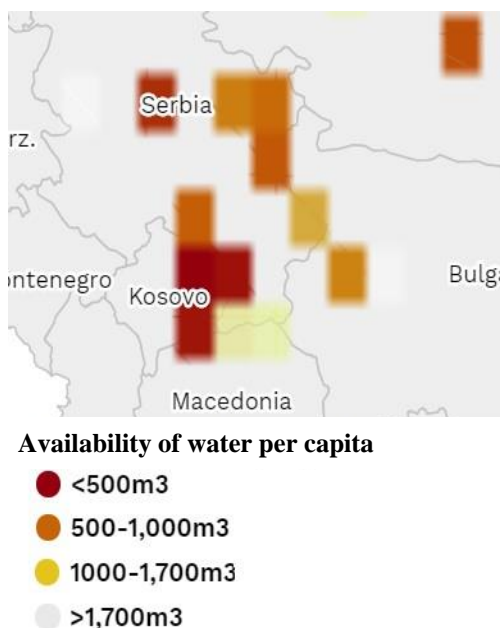


Figure 7. Stressed areas of water availability (worldwater.io)

From 1999 until today, nothing has been done to redistribute activities and to have equal use of resources towards other basins, especially towards the

White Drim basin, which is hydrologically much stronger than the Ibar basin. The pressure on the Ibar basin continues to grow at an unabated pace with new population concentrations and investments in the energy sector (New Kosovo 450MW) as well as other economic activities. All the strategies available to the public in Kosovo rely on the increased catchment of the Gazivode lake reservoir by the Ibar-Lepenac canal, while completely ignoring the interests of central Serbia, where the hydrological situation is conditioned by the hydrological potential of the Ibar River (Figure 7).

The Pristina side and the elites in Kosovo do not see any problem in this approach, and dialogue or the need to talk about the rational use of water resources, which is common, has never existed. The Washington Agreement gave economic importance to the water resources of the Ibar River for the first time through point 7. However, although this item of the agreement in terms of the development of dialogue represented a great step forward, despite great expectations, it did not produce the effect for either side to capitalize on it.

Pristina was apparently forced to include this point in the agreement, even though a member of the negotiating team from the coalition party AAK was absent from the signing ceremony in protest, and the president of this party threatened to overthrow the government during the signing itself because of this point. On the other hand, Belgrade did not receive any assurances in the submitted proposal of the feasibility study (US DoE PNNL 2021) that the pressure and strain on the water resources of the Ibar River will be reduced and the interests of communities, municipalities and regions downstream from Raška will be protected, except for the confirmation of factors in the domain of water resources control. On the contrary, the study supports the interests of Pristina and the investment framework for the improvement of greater water abstraction from this basin.

Although the study document specified the obligation to control water quality at the reservoir and outlets, it did not consider any water quality

management mechanisms on the tributaries of the Ibar River, especially on the Sitnica River. Thus, all the burden of investment and responsibility was transferred to Belgrade, while Pristina has no obligation to solve the problems within its jurisdiction that create far more significant problems in the municipalities of Raška and Kraljevo and further downstream. In addition, it must be noted that the proposed document completely ignores (or the authors are not aware of) the water management strategies of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia, which can have a major impact on the observed area.

The document proposed as a model of cooperation the example of the Columbia River and the basin shared by the US and Canada. The quality of this example is the absence of a hegemon in the control of water resources, so this example is ideal to create conditions and motivate parties to participate in negotiations. Some other examples and practices of transboundary basins can only create the opposite effect and postpone the possibility of cooperation indefinitely which would benefit no one. However, no further progress has been made since the preparation of the study in this field and the problems, as before, have been postponed.

The problem of water and resources from the Ibar basin, and thus the resources of Lake Gazivode, are a sensitive issue for Pristina because Pristina does not have the ability to control the inflow of water into this reservoir. Instead of taking the initiative and initiating dialogue, Pristina expects foreign partners to protect its interests while at the same time demonstrating sovereignty and control over the Gazivode Lake area by using a monopoly of force. Belgrade is planning investments and the development of traffic infrastructure in the Raška region, which implies a better connection with Montenegro, in the part of the upper Ibar basin. Currently, there are no indications that Belgrade plans to build any water management facilities in this area in the near future, but the very fact that they are possible represents a real and credible threat to Kosovo's economy. In this sense, the dialogue on the management and quality of water in the

Ibar river basin should be started as soon as possible, primarily because Pristina has a greater interest in it than Belgrade.

Cooperation is the only way to avoid conflicts, especially in areas where hydrological characteristics have a transboundary character. In this sense, it is imperative that this topic be debated in public, and that this topic be put on the table of technical negotiations in Brussels, because the issue of responsible use of environmental resources is of the greatest importance for creating long-term regional stability. There are a handful of examples in the world that tell us that water resources that are shared with hostile ethnic groups become very fertile ground for the outbreak of conflict. Ignoring this topic would be proof of the frivolity and irresponsibility of the political elites.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political ecosystem: The socio-political and economic market ecosystem is currently not favorable for dealing with environmental problems, especially in the circumstances of the unclear territorial organization of the Balkans, at the level of rational and universal principles. Narratives and interests are primarily in the service of political, national, and economic interests of ethnic groups. Environmental problems are often misused against another ethnic group and thus this acute area is drawn even deeper into a potential conflict in the future. Nevertheless, in the public space, the media, civil society, and citizens can and must insist that political subjects and leaders clearly state their position and define their program and way of solving environmental problems. International organizations, especially financial institutions, have mechanisms that set the framework for supporting or financing projects in relation to protecting the interest of groups outside the investment area, which can be helpful in motivating political elites to design their programs in a responsible manner (World Bank OP protocols; EU directives and IPA protocols; USAID - 22 CFR 216, etc.). Such mechanisms are desirable, useful and welcome, but the real responsibility and ownership of the consequences of decisions made or not made remain only with the competent institutions.

Civil society: Since it is unlikely that political narratives will be changed in the direction of effective action for common interests, because it does not bring political capital to elites, the burden falls on civil society to monitor the decision-making and activities of political elites, corporate society, and even individual communities and administrative units. As an impartial actor in the absence of institutional cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina, the civil sector is the only one with the possibility to fill the empty space.

Civil society can create a form of cooperation, enable monitoring mechanisms, data measurement, information exchange, start activities of creating public policies, drafting legal strategic and other plans that

improve the quality of the environment and eliminate potential threats to stability in the region. National institutions and agencies should include recommendations, measures and action plans in their investment plans (for example, afforestation, stocking, area remediation programs, etc.). It is of critical importance to create as soon as possible a pollutant cadastre that will describe the mobility of pollution with clear hotspot locations, discharge points and a pollution inventory, according to a methodology that would be acceptable to all parties. The absence of institutional cooperation must not be an excuse to delay this analysis because such a document is necessary as a starting point for creating an investment framework and problem-solving technology.

Civil sector must not be a silent observer of activities that create environmental injustice at the local, national, and regional levels. It can build an information base for collecting data from the field, either through information technologies (measuring sites, applications, telemetry systems...), but also through cooperation, especially with individuals and groups of those who have direct information from the field (associations of fishermen, hunters, forest harvesters, tourist organizations...).

International community can donate funds to start activities in this field, but the goal is for the financing of the activities to be taken over by national institutions and agencies whose obligations are realized by the civil sector. The international community has ways to motivate Belgrade and Pristina to initially take part, and later take over the full financing of these activities and thus take ownership of the achieved goals.

Educational institutions: The curricula with an emphasis on sustainable development and ecology must be improved both in primary education and in higher education institutions. It would be ideal to coordinate programs at the level of the entire Balkans in order to create a long-term generation of citizens who would be able to solve common problems using a familiar vocabulary and methodologies.

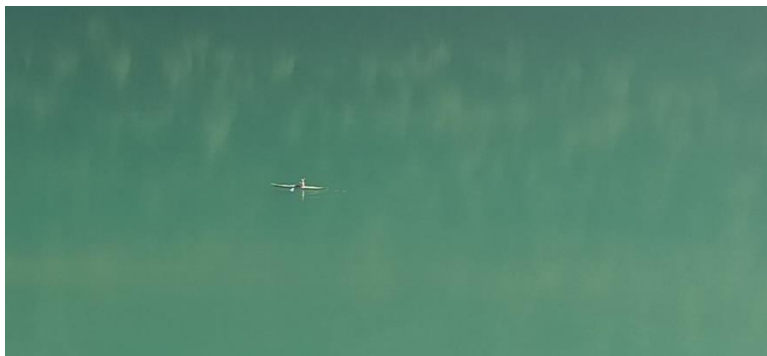
An example of a possible positive role of the Community of Serb Municipalities:

Kosovo is unsuccessfully trying to become part of the international initiative for protection of the Danube (<https://www.icpdr.org/main/>) and in that it encounters smaller obstacles from Serbia, but greater obstacles from other member countries of the initiative that did not recognize Kosovo's independence (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine). It should be noted that regardless of the fact that these countries do not recognize the independence of Kosovo, they unanimously support the Brussels dialogue and respect the agreements and obligations resulting from this process.

Let's assume that the Community of Serb Municipalities is established and that its administrative services include a Secretariat for Environment. The Government of Kosovo could appoint this secretariat as a permanent member of the inter-ministerial water council and assign it the role of representing Kosovo within the international initiative for the protection of the Danube. The secretariat would thus participate in the work of this initiative, prepare reports on meetings and conclusions and submit them directly to the government of Kosovo.

Bearing in mind that the Community of Serb Municipalities is a product of the Brussels Agreement and the point of the agreement on which Belgrade insists the most, it would be logical for Belgrade not to object to Pristina's participation in this initiative. Also, it would be logical for all countries that do not recognize Kosovo to accept its membership because the agreement on the representation of Kosovo resulted from the Brussels Process, supported by everyone.

Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina for sustainable development: It would be useful to create an impact assessment of individual Brussels agreements on the environment, as well as an inventory of topics related to environmental protection that are not considered (ignored) within the technical or political dialogue. Such an assessment could be used to mobilize the public on the necessity of solving problems serving towards a better quality of life for citizens.





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