

Uppsala, 24 November 2010

To
President of the Republic of Lithuania
Mrs. Dalia Grybauskaite

Chairwoman of the Lithuanian Parliament
Mrs. Irena Degutiene

Premier Minister of the Republic of Lithuania
Mr. Andrius Kubilius

Minister of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
Mr. Gediminas Kazlauskas

Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania
Mr. Kazys Starkevicius

Concerning the Lithuanian Parliament project on renewable energy resources and plans for new Hydro-power dams in Lithuanian rivers

We, the Coalition Clean Baltic, a network of 25 environmental NGOs in the Baltic Sea catchment, are very concerned with the Lithuanian plans for construction of many new hydro-power dams in Lithuanian rivers systems.

Lithuania decided in 2003 on the enactment of the order No. 27/3 D-13 "Regarding settings of environmental requirements for protection of migratory fish species". This order, which included the list of rivers and river stretches protected from negative impact of the construction of hydro-power plants, was a very important support for the protection of migratory fish species, such as salmon and sea-trout, and of great importance for the whole Baltic Sea Region.

In 2004 the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) adopted the amendment of Law on Water (Article 14). In accordance to this law, the dam building on the Nemunas and other rivers that are valuable in terms of ecology and culture was forbidden. In this way Lithuania assured the successful implementation of its international obligations regarding the conservation of migratory fishes (HELCOM decisions for protection of wild Baltic salmon; Bern Convention, ratified by the Parliament in 1996) and protection of river valleys from flooding and execution of territories with highest biological diversity.

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E-mail: secretariat@ccb.se / gunnar.noren@ccb.se www.ccb.se Org. number: 802015-1281 CCB is a member of The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Coalition Clean Baltic is a network of environmental NGOs sponsored by:

- Danish Society for Nature Conservation • Estonian Society for Nature Conservation • Estonian Green Movement
- Finnish Association for Nature Conservation • Finnish Society for Nature & Environment • Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND
- Environmental Protection Club of Latvia, VAK • Latvian Green Movement • Lithuanian Green Movement
- Lithuanian Fund for Nature • Environment Information Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania • Polish Ecological Club, PKE • Green Federation - GAJA, Szczecin, Poland
- Ecobaltic Foundation, Gdansk, Poland • Ecological Library Foundation, Poznan, Poland • Friends of the Baltic, St Petersburg, Russia • Ecodefense, Kaliningrad, Russia • Neva River Clearwater, St Petersburg, Russia • Green World, St Petersburg, Russia • The Guide Environmental Group, Kaliningrad, Russia • Greens of Karelia, Petrozavodsk, Russia • Friends of the Earth, Sweden • Swedish Society for Nature Conservation • Swedish-Polish Association for Environmental Protection
- WWF Sweden • The Western Center of the Ukrainian Branch of the World Laboratory

CCB congratulated Lithuania after these decisions for its far-seeing efforts and experience in protecting rivers from negative impact of hydro-power development, which could serve as a good example for protection of river ecosystems and its biological diversity for many Baltic Sea Region countries. CCB also encouraged Lithuania to share its achievements with other Baltic Sea governments.

Herewith we express our serious concern regarding the plans of intensive development of hydro energy is foreseen by the prepared draft of the Law on Renewable Energy. Twofold increase in capacity of hydropower plants up to the year 2020 is established in the article 13 of Law draft. It is necessary to note that these plans cannot be implemented without flooding and destruction of ecologically valuable river ecosystems, including the biggest Lithuanian rivers - Nemunas and Neris.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that due to highly negative environmental impact of dams and due to the regulations of the Water Framework Directive (article 4.7), new dams are rarely built in the European Union countries. Meanwhile, most rapid development is focused on the renewable energy resources that are based on the modern long-term sustainable technologies – wind-power, biomass combustion, solar energy etc.

Pursuant to an extremely high damage to the biodiversity that is caused by the dams, we are referring to prevent the above mentioned foreseen extremely intensive development of hydro-power energy (Article 13). In accordance with EC Directive on Renewable Energy (2009/28/EC) we propose to orient the development should be oriented of the renewable energy resources towards the modern energy resources i.e. wind, biomass, geothermic, solar energy, that are much more energetically effective and have much less negative environmental impact.

As we understand the planned activities for renewable energy can include construction of several hundreds new dams in Lithuanian river systems. Such plans would only correspond to approx. 3,5 % of electricity demand and only 0,6 % of the general energy demand in Lithuania, but will have major environmental impact on the ecological and biological values of Lithuanian rivers.

Today there is a deficiency of pristine river ecosystems in the Baltic Sea Region. Most river ecosystems are influenced by human activities. Biological valuable and pristine river ecosystems must be protected and the habitats and river passages for native migratory fish species, such as wild Baltic salmon and sea-trout, must be secured for future generations.

Lithuanian decisions to allow for wide-scale construction of hydro-power dams would also be a very bad political signal on biodiversity protection under the United Nations year for Biological Diversity in 2010.

Lithuanian rivers have significant ecological values in protection of the whole Baltic Sea. We ask you very kindly to not allow to legitimize execution of destruction of Lithuanian ecologically valuable rivers systems.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of Coalition Clean Baltic



Gunnar Norén
Executive secretary of CCB