

Issue paper

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CEE Bankwatch Network's mission is to prevent environmentally and socially harmful impacts of international development finance, and to promote alternative solutions and public participation.

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Ombla Hydro Power Plant, Croatia

In early 2011 the EBRD published a procurement notice on its site for the Ombla Hydro Power Plant near Dubrovnik. The hydropower plant, with an expected annual production of 223 GWh, is planned to be constructed underground in a karst area, which brings with it specific hydrological and ecological impacts, particularly on cave-dwelling species.

For these reasons the Environmental Impact Assessment process is of utmost importance. In addition, Hrvatska Elektroprivreda (HEP), the Croatian electricity company, does not have a distinguished environmental record, particularly in the construction of hydropower plants. Its controversial plant on the River Dobra was constructed in recent years in contradiction of a Bern Convention Standing Committee delegation recommendation not to go ahead with the project.

An enquiry to HEP about the approval process for the Ombla plant yielded the following information:

- The statement on the EIA for Ombla HPP was issued on 30 November 1999.
- The location permit was issued on 2 May 2006.
- The basic construction permit was issued on 2 July 2010.
- Additional studies were conducted during 2009 and 2010.

This means it has been more than 11 years since the EIA process with public consultations was held.

We would therefore like to ask the EBRD what measures it intends to take to ensure that the public has a meaningful opportunity to comment on this project, in a way which can seriously be taken into account and have real impacts on the decision to undertake the project or not.

The source of the Ombla river. The hydropower plant would be underground but is likely to impact the spring.

