

25 October 2022
President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Open letter to the European Commission President on hydro projects in protected areas in Romania

Dear President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen,

We are writing on behalf of Romanian civil society groups dedicated to the protection of the uniqueness of some of the last free flowing rivers of Europe to urge you to act beyond our generation's horizon, for the benefit of Europe as a whole.

Romania's Resilience and Recovery Plan and the REPowerEU chapter will be the main topics on your agenda for **the meeting with the Romanian Prime Minister, Nicolae Ciucă, on Wednesday, 26 October**. We know about the Romanian government's intentions to push hydropower projects in the REPowerEU chapter, some of which would breach EU directives on biodiversity and water protection and would bring devastating and irreversible damages to Natura 2000 sites in Romania.

We raise our voices particularly for the Defileul Jiului National Park and Natura 2000 site Călimani-Gurghiu where rich biodiversity is endangered by outdated hydro projects and unrealistic energy planning. The current energy difficult situation must not be the pretext to approve projects that will harm our natural heritage irreversibly.

We are reminding that Romania has been in infringement procedure since 2015 [[INFR\(2015\)4036](#)], for such hydropower plants built in Natura 2000 sites, not only for these exemplified in the reasoned opinion, but for the systemic problem, in general. Moreover, for the incomplete designation of Natura 2000 sites, there is already an opened infringement procedure for the transposition of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([NFR2020/2297](#)), as well as for the non-designation of Special Conservation Areas ([INFR2020/2238](#)).

Continuing construction of these projects by destroying natural protected areas will not solve the energy crisis. Many of the hydro projects that our government plans will bring devastating and irreversible damage to Natura 2000 sites in Romania and we have the most powerful scientific arguments for this.

We ask you to let the Romanian Prime Minister know that Nature and the laws that protect it are not negotiable, and neither is life.

Yours sincerely,

Bankwatch România
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Agent Green
Eco-Civica
Călin Dejeu, member of World Commission of Protected Areas - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
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