



Arbeitsgemeinschaft
der Fischereiverbände der Alpenländer

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ARGEFA (Fisheries associations of the Alps) oppose against an excessive expansion of hydropower facilities

This resolution is dedicated to the attention of politicians and governmental authorities of alpine countries in the EU, to the EU commission and to the European parliament.

The increasing role of climate protection in politics brings along a booming interest in hydropower use. Particularly the alpine countries face an enormous increase in requests for new hydropower plants. Descent and the amount of water in these regions are determining factors for this development.

Lobbyists imply that electricity derived from hydropower is environmentally conscious in view of the problems that occur with global climate change. The damage it causes to ecology and fisheries, together with only marginal CO₂ saving, is often unknown or, to the worse, neglected.

Today, there are more than 10.000 hydropower plants in the alpine countries, most of them built as small facilities. The majority of them (95 %) do, in sum, not contribute to more than 10 % of the total hydropower output. The share of hydropower on the overall generation of electricity (nuclear power, fossile energy etc.) ranges between 20 and 100 %, depending on the region considered. Hydropower generated in core regions of the Alps exceeds regional demands by far.

Now, subsidy programs, the design of which barely meeting ecological needs, promise economic profit even at locations that are energetically unfavorable. An ecologic benefit is often not provided. All locations that allow for a true economic advantage have already been developed, and it must be noted that compensatory ecological measures do not comply with today's standards, despite existing legal guidelines.

Flowing waters are among the most diverse ecological systems we know. They connect different habitats and thereby contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity.



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Südtirol



Slovenian Fishing
Association

Due to the enormously large number and inappropriate design of hydropower plants in the Alps there are only few natural and functional creeks and rivers left. The ecologically important biosphere “Alpine and prealpine creeks and rivers” is thus highly threatened.

The primary effect of hydropower use is a disturbed migration in upstream and downstream direction, especially for fish. Essential habitats such as spawning grounds become inaccessible since hydropower plants obstruct migrations of fish. Turbines harm fish when they pass through, causing high mortality rates. Alteration of flow dynamics, gravel movements and habitat structure also have severe effects on fish populations. Habitats mostly undergo qualitative and quantitative losses or are completely destroyed. These deficits largely contribute to the ongoing decline of typical fish species of the Alps and it must be noted that all rheophilic fish are now endangered or at risk of extinction according to the Red List of Endangered Species. Fish are among the most threatened animal groups of the Alps.

Based on these arguments, the partnering associations in the AGEFA with their 500.000 members request

- ✓ to prevent the de novo building of small hydropower plants
- ✓ to protect the last naturally flowing waters
- ✓ Adaption of existing hydropower plants to modern standards and better efficiency, instead of building new facilities
- ✓ to set ecological guidelines, especially when continuation of hydropower approvals is applied for. These may comprise the installation of fish protectors or fish passes, reduction of hydrodynamic amplitudes, the increase of minimal flows and the management of gravel dynamics
- ✓ Adjustment of approved facilities to current ecological guidelines and frameworks (WRRL, Natura 2000, Nature conservation law)
- ✓ Restoration of the accessibility of habitats upstream and downstream for fish.

Kitzbühel the 14.th of December

The Presidents

M. Braun



Landesfischereiverband
Bayern

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Fischereiverband
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