



## Open letter to Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania

Brussels, 05/10/2020

Dear Prime Minister Edi Rama,

We strongly welcome your statement of Friday, 25 September, announcing that the permit for the building of the Kalivaç dam has been rejected and that no further permits will be granted for hydropower plants on the lower Vjosa River.

This is a great decision that many have fought for, and it has been a long fight for Albanian and international civil society, most of all for the people in the region. This decision will have an invaluable impact on the environment and biodiversity around one of Europe's last free flowing rivers. It moreover is in the interest of the people in the region, who had been fearing for their livelihoods that depend on an intact river ecosystem and their access to water.

Moreover, saving the Vjosa River also sends the signal to Brussels that Albania is committed to playing its part in European environmental protection. We, the undersigned Members, are following your words and decisions very closely. This decision is a positive signal of Albania's commitment for the accession negotiations with the EU.

We also want to point out that while this decision is highly welcomed, there are several other ongoing hydropower plant projects that are currently endangering the nature of Albania, including the one in the Valbona National Park. We ask you to revisit the projects and practices related to hydropower and show the same commitment to preserve the wonderful natural heritage of your country.

Once again, we thank you and your government for the decision to fully protect the entire Vjosa River and to establish a Vjosa national park along it. We wish for strong ties between Albania and the EU and want to move the joint efforts for environmental protection further, including in the accession process of Albania to the EU.

Sincerely,

Thomas Waitz, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the European Green Party

Niklas Nienaß, Member of the European Parliament

Jutta Paulus, Member of the European Parliament

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Member of the European Parliament

Ciarán Cuffe, Member of the European Parliament