



Dear Dimiter,

Rivers are essential to our livelihoods. They provide freshwater fisheries that are the primary source of nutrients for millions, they nourish and irrigate farms to feed the world, they provide critical energy and sanitation services, and they are home to immense biological diversity.

Yet the threat to rivers has never been greater, especially in a time of climate change. Thousands of hydropower projects are planned or under construction on the world's rivers. After the Paris agreement, some governments and financiers mistakenly see hydropower as a climate solution. Billions of dollars are on the line, and that's money that could be used to build clean, accessible energy and water infrastructure for the world's poor. The impact of big infrastructure on our global water resources is exacerbated by climate change. Healthy rivers, which can protect against both flood and drought, have never been more important to people or the planet.

River activists have seen many impressive victories in the last two years, with the cancellation of dams in such places as Chile, Brazil, and China. Yet water protectors and community defenders are faced with increasing threats and intimidation as they speak out. Much more must be done to create a sustainable energy future that protects our rivers.

CEE Bankwatch Network and International Rivers are pleased to ask you if you would be interested in participating in an international gathering of river and dam activists scheduled from March 28-31 (including three days of meetings and a field visit) in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The gathering will:

- Recognize and link critical struggles against destructive hydropower dams;
- Build cooperation between different campaigns;
- Share experience from local to global efforts to protect rivers;
- Share campaign advocacy skills;
- Develop strategies to transform development finance on hydropower and energy;
- Help us understand how hydropower is not a climate solution;
- Support a global movement for rivers.

Please inform us no later than December 22 if you are interested in attending the gathering. We will be able to cover primary travel costs and local accommodations. To be considered for the gathering, please inform us:

- How this gathering will benefit your work;
- What information you may be able to share with others at the gathering through workshops and panels;
- Your priorities for gaining new skills and expertise;
- Your language needs.

Please send your message to rivergathering-I@ecn.cz by December 22, 2016.

If you are interested in attending, please save the dates, including necessary time to travel to and from Tbilisi, Georgia from your home country. We hope to see you!

Sincerely,

Petr Hlobil
Campaigns Director,
CEE Bankwatch Network

Kate Horner
Executive Director
International Rivers