



Title: Inefficient management of St Jernej Canal

The Court of Audit issued an audit report on the efficiency of managing St Jernej Canal situated in the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park - an area of recognised natural value and part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

The audit revealed that in the period of 13 years at least EUR 14.3 million was spent for management of the Canal and disclosed several inefficiencies, such as illicit mooring of more than a hundred vessels to illegally set piers and buoys. Many of the vessels in the Canal are abandoned, damaged and fully or partially sunk which is considered a potential danger with possible harmful effects.

Within a span of more than 12 years, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning failed to carry out activities to remedy the concerned situation. It did not exercise a single supervision procedure for removing the illegally set piers, mooring buoys and vessels from the Canal, nor it carried out a procedure in order to find out when the piers and mooring buoys were actually set and whether any legal base for their removal existed.

The company Soline as manager of the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park failed to exercise the supervision activities in full due to absence of an adequately qualified nature conservation supervisor. The Municipality of Piran was also involved in the Nature Park management, being a holder of water rights to construct a local port but was unable to find a suitable investor in six years.

When the audit report was issued, the Municipality of Piran and the company Soline commenced implementation of activities (exercising supervision and removing abandoned vessels along the shore) to bring about improvements in St Jernej Canal, which gives a ray of hope that this gem of Slovenian coastal area may be preserved.

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