

IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: MOTION 130

We cannot destroy
protected areas with
construction
under the justification of
tourism development.

"What used to be a sanctuary
can now become a resort."



The Global Threat

Nature is under growing pressure. For decades, protected areas have been the cornerstone of efforts to protect biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Yet in the name of economic development, tourism infrastructure has pushed to the edges of protected areas, exploiting legal loopholes. In many countries, the boundaries of these areas are being pushed back, not by nature, but by laws rewritten for investors.

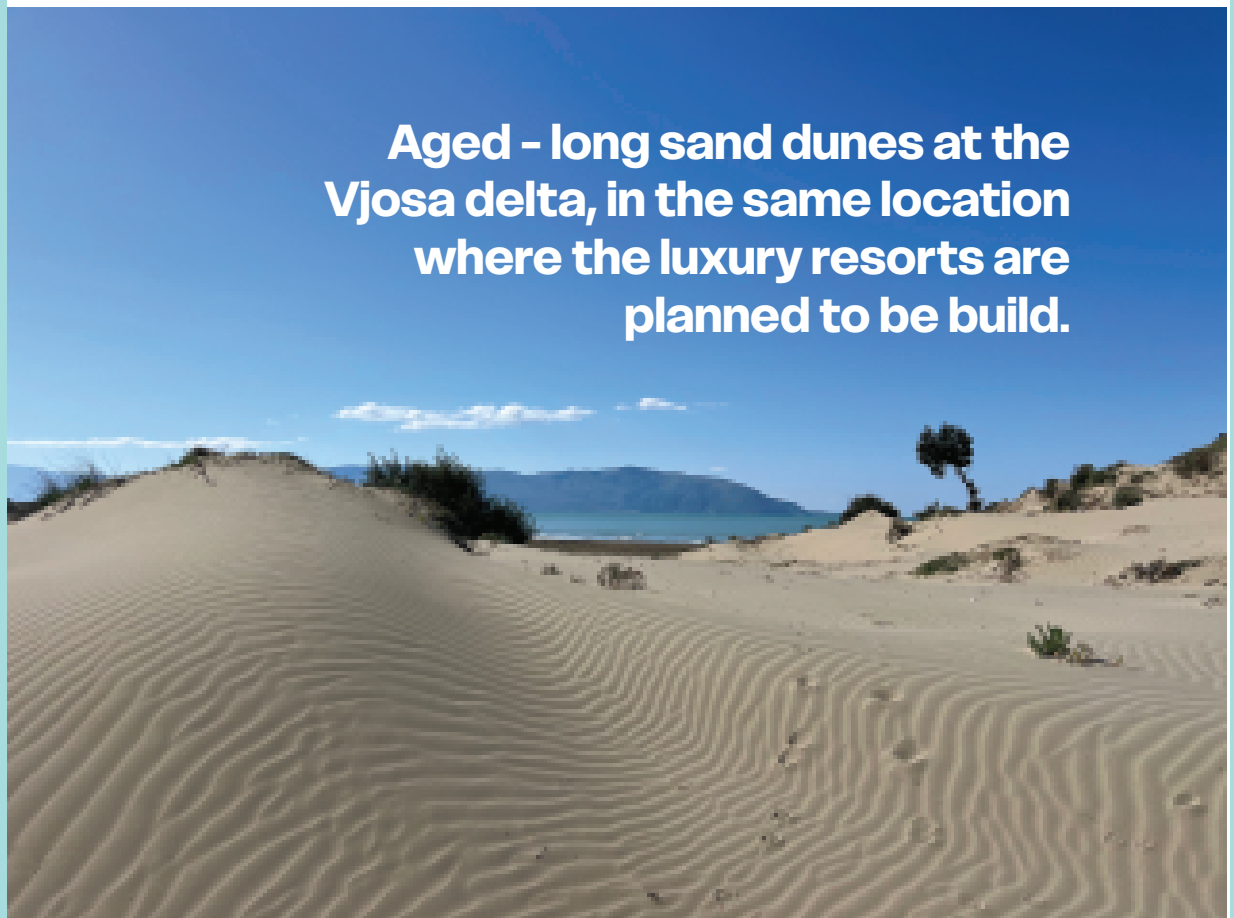
Tourism, when well-planned, can benefit conservation. But increasingly, it's used as a justification for mass construction: luxury resorts, airports, and energy infrastructure in the heart of ecosystems that should remain untouched.

Birds repeatedly nesting on the fence of the airport, which is being built at the heart of the Protected Area.



When national laws fail, international standards must hold the line.

Aged – long sand dunes at the Vjosa delta, in the same location where the luxury resorts are planned to be built.



Why It Matters Globally?

Protected areas are under growing pressure worldwide.

Deregulation in one country can:
Set a dangerous precedent, undermining international conservation standards.
Become a blueprint for similar rollbacks elsewhere.



Motion 130

At the upcoming 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), members will vote on Motion 130, which calls for stronger protection of national parks and nature reserves against unsustainable tourism development.

The motion proposes that countries should:

- Reaffirm that protected areas are for conservation, not mass development.
- Ensure that high-protection areas, IUCN Categories I (Strict Nature Reserves) & II (National Parks), remain off-limits to large-scale tourism infrastructure.
- Demand that national laws align with IUCN guidelines.
- Require strong environmental and social impact assessments before any tourism development is considered.
- Create standardized indicators to track and enforce legal protection, and make data publicly available.

A glossy ibis resting in the remaining coastal wetlands in Albania, which are a refugee for migratory species



A Dangerous Precedent: Albania's Law No. 21/2024

In 2024, Albania amended its Law on Protected Areas to:

- **Allow** tourism complexes, airports, and energy facilities even in IUCN Category I & II areas.
- **Permit** boundary changes to fit development projects.

This legal change undermines conservation principles and opens the door for similar rollbacks in other countries.



Proponent (Sponsor)

Ruajtja dhe Mbrojtja e Mjedisit Natyror ne Shqiperi
([PPNEA, Albania](#))

Co-sponsors

EuroNatur – Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe
([Germany](#))

Tour du Valat ([France](#))

Wetlands International ([The Netherlands](#))

Sociedad Geológica de España ([Spain](#))

Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos
([Greece](#))

Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania ([Albania](#))

Centar za zastitu i proucavanje ptica Crne Gore
([Montenegro](#))

Centar za istrazuvanje i informiranje za zivotnaata
sredina Eko-svest Skopje ([North Macedonia](#))

Udruga BIOM ([Croatia](#))

Bâlgarska Fondatzia Bioraznoobrazie ([Bulgaria](#))

Loro Parque Fundación ([Spain](#))

Association Les Amis des Oiseaux ([Tunisia](#))

Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco ([Monaco](#))

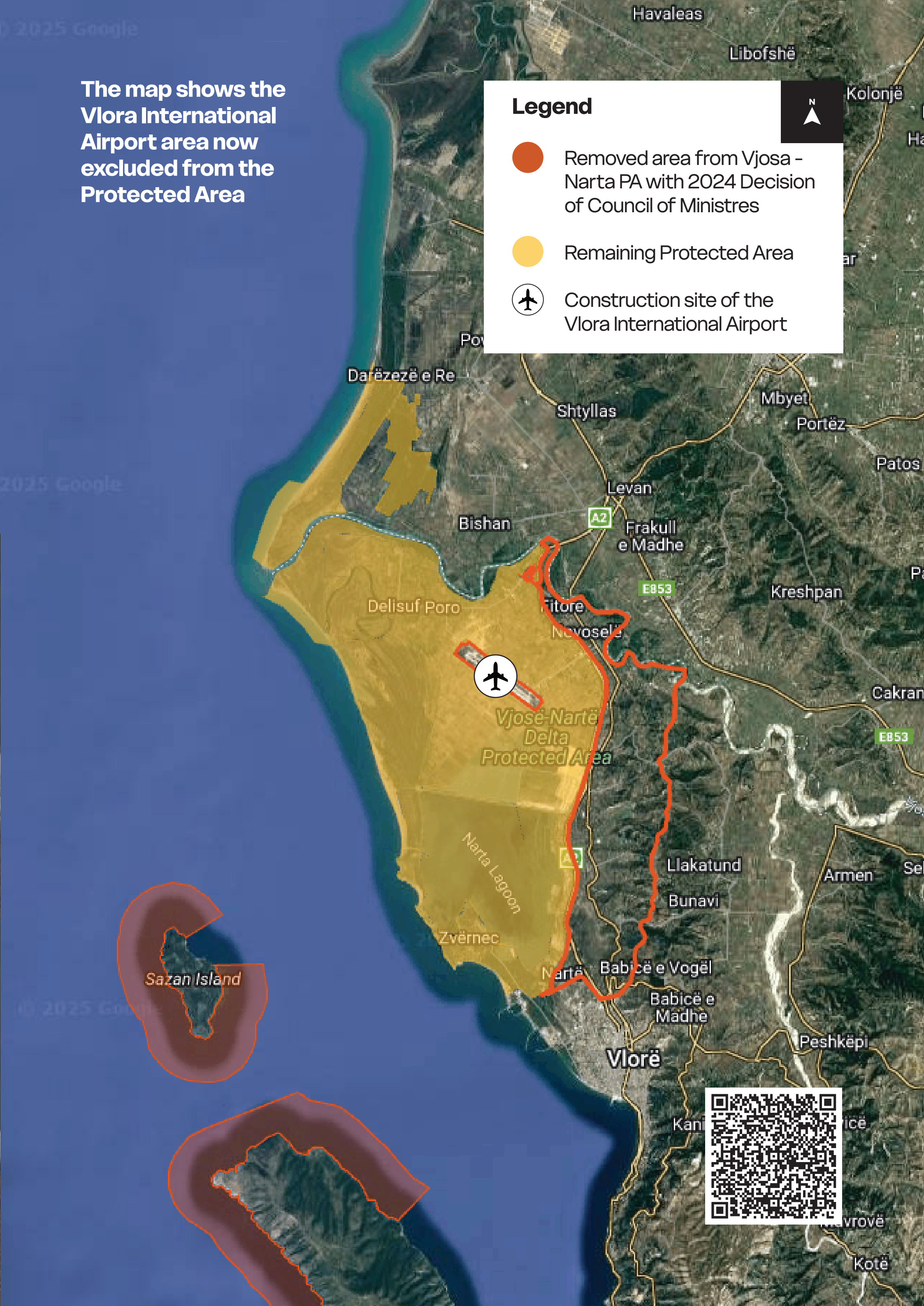
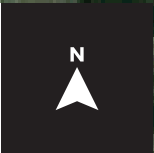
BirdLife International ([United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland](#))



The map shows the
Vlora International
Airport area now
excluded from the
Protected Area

Legend

- Removed area from Vjosa - Narta PA with 2024 Decision of Council of Ministres
- Remaining Protected Area
- Construction site of the Vlora International Airport



Narta Lagoon: From Sanctuary to Construction Site

One of Albania's most important wetlands, Narta Lagoon hosts over 200 bird species, including Dalmatian pelicans and flamingos, and plays a vital role for migratory birds along the Adriatic flyway. Identified by experts as meeting the criteria for Ramsar designation, it is now under threat from planned airport and resort construction enabled by new legal loopholes.



Zvernec, once a place where
nature embraced history,
now risks being claimed by
concrete.



10,000 rooms resort and
residences planned at the
Vjosa delta, located at the
former core zone

We urge:

Governments — Reject laws that weaken environmental protection.

Institutions & conservation bodies — Support Motion 130 and speak up against deregulation.

Civil society & individuals — Share, advocate, and urge decision-makers to act.

Support Motion 130.

Tourism Is No Excuse to Destroy Protected Areas.

