

# ALBANIAN PRISTINE NATURE SERIOUSLY POLLUTED



Albania has a huge tourism potential that may, however, be wasted if the country does not solve its serious problems with pollution.

Albania is one of the Europe's poorest and least developed countries. Nevertheless, it has wonderful mountains and beaches therefore a huge tourism potential. **The tourism industry is an important driver for the state's economy.** However, as the tourism and other infrastructure develop and the people accept the consumerism life style, the country has bigger and bigger problems with waste. Today, it is a common problem in several countries in Balkans.

Communism managed to preserve pristine landscapes for Albania but as the old regime fell down the country became more and more polluted. A visitor may see piles of trash by the roadside. Some people even dump it over cliffs or into rivers. Poor garbage disposal management and sewage systems, these are the major Albanian problems.

**Rapid development of tourism infrastructure and mass tourism are not helping the ecosystem either.** Some experts for example claim that Tirana's sewage goes directly into rivers and that waste from newly built hotels along the coast flows into the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. The problem has not been addressed for many years and it may have devastating effects on the country's tourism industry, especially now in time of global crisis. In some places the pollution has gone so far that people rather do not swim at all in the sea full of waste.

Politicians promise they will solve the problems. The question is whether they will remember what they promised after the elections. After all there is the global crisis and funds are scarce. Perhaps Albania could develop as an eco tourism destination rather than as a mass tourism one.

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