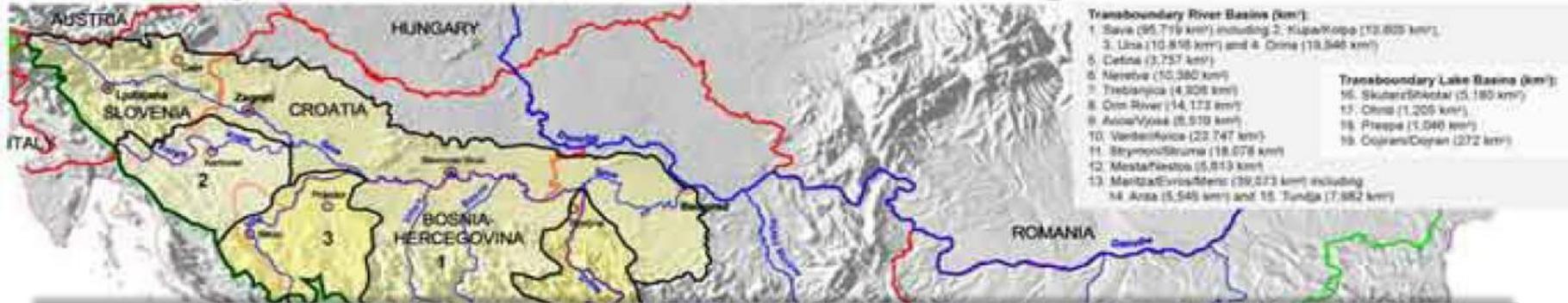


# Establishing Cooperation for the Management of the Drin River Basin: **from dreams to deeds**

National workshop on frameworks for transboundary water cooperation:  
Focus on the UNECE Water Convention  
Amman, Jordan, 10 March 2015

# Transboundary Water Management in SEE

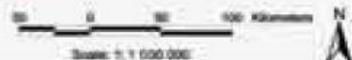
## Internationally Shared Surface Water Bodies in the Balkan Region



**In Southeastern Europe  
90% of the area falls within shared basins**

### LEGEND

- Border
- Capitals and settlements within the transboundary river basins:
  - Metropolis (> 1 Million Inhabitants)
  - Cities (100,000 - 1 Million Inhabitants)
  - Towns (50,000 - 100,000 Inhabitants)
- Transboundary river basins
- Transboundary rivers and important other rivers
- Transboundary lakes
- Margin of the Danube river basin



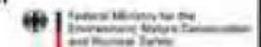
### Internationally Shared Surface Water Bodies in the Balkan Region

November 2004

Extended Assessment for the:

ZINKE

Produced by ZINKE ENVIRONMENT CONSULTING for Central and Eastern Europe and FLUNUS, Floodplain Ecology and Management, Vienna 2004



## Some background for the region and the basin

- The region has a background of **political instability and conflict**
- Most of the countries are still in the process **towards establishing a market economy**
- Some countries are EU members. In the Non EU countries, **major reforms** guided primarily by the **EU accession prospect** have been initiated
- **Economic growth is dictating choices** for water and other natural resources management in many cases. However, environmental considerations are a clear part of the agenda

# Some facts about the Drin Basin

## A complex Basin

- Complex hydrology: interconnected surface and groundwaters/ karstic
- Transboundary sub-basins of paramount ecological importance from a European and international conservation perspective

## Unilateral management approaches

- The Basin encounters diverse and unsustainable management approaches leading, among other impacts, to ecosystems' degradation
- Some action towards IWRM taken at country level (driven by EU accession prospect). Riparians are at various stages of EU WFD transposition and implementation
- Legally binding agreements exist among littoral countries for each of the international lakes
- National and sub-basin plans would fail without taking into account the extended Basin's water balance (which has not been assessed)

# **The Drin River Basin collaboration**

*A parallel top-down & bottom-up approach,*

*with strong political will and international assistance*

*building on existing collaboration schemes developed for  
the transboundary Lakes of Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar,*

*and extending to the greater Drin River Basin*



# The Drin River Basin Dialogue

Initiated on an *ad hoc* basis already in 2006, and started *per se* in late 2008, the Drin Dialogue was a rich and coordinated consultation process among the:

- **water resources management competent Ministries** of the five riparians (Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo (under UN SC Resolution 1244) and Montenegro)
- the existing **joint Commissions/Committees** in the sub-basins and all related **stakeholders**
- **civil society workshops** were carried out in the sub-basins prior to the joint commissions/committees & stakeholders consultations

## With the main objective to:

Develop a **Strategic Shared Vision** among the competent national authorities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin basin



# The Drin River Basin Dialogue: a Partnership

The Policy and Technical Cooperation Framework is provided, *inter alia*, by:

- The UNECE Water Convention
- The European Union Water Framework Directive
- The Petersberg Phase II Process / Athens Declaration Process
- GEF IW:LEARN
- The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI)
- The GEF MedPartnership

Financial Support has been provided, *inter alia*, by: Swedish EPA, German ENV Ministry, GEF, Greek ENV Ministry, and other agencies.

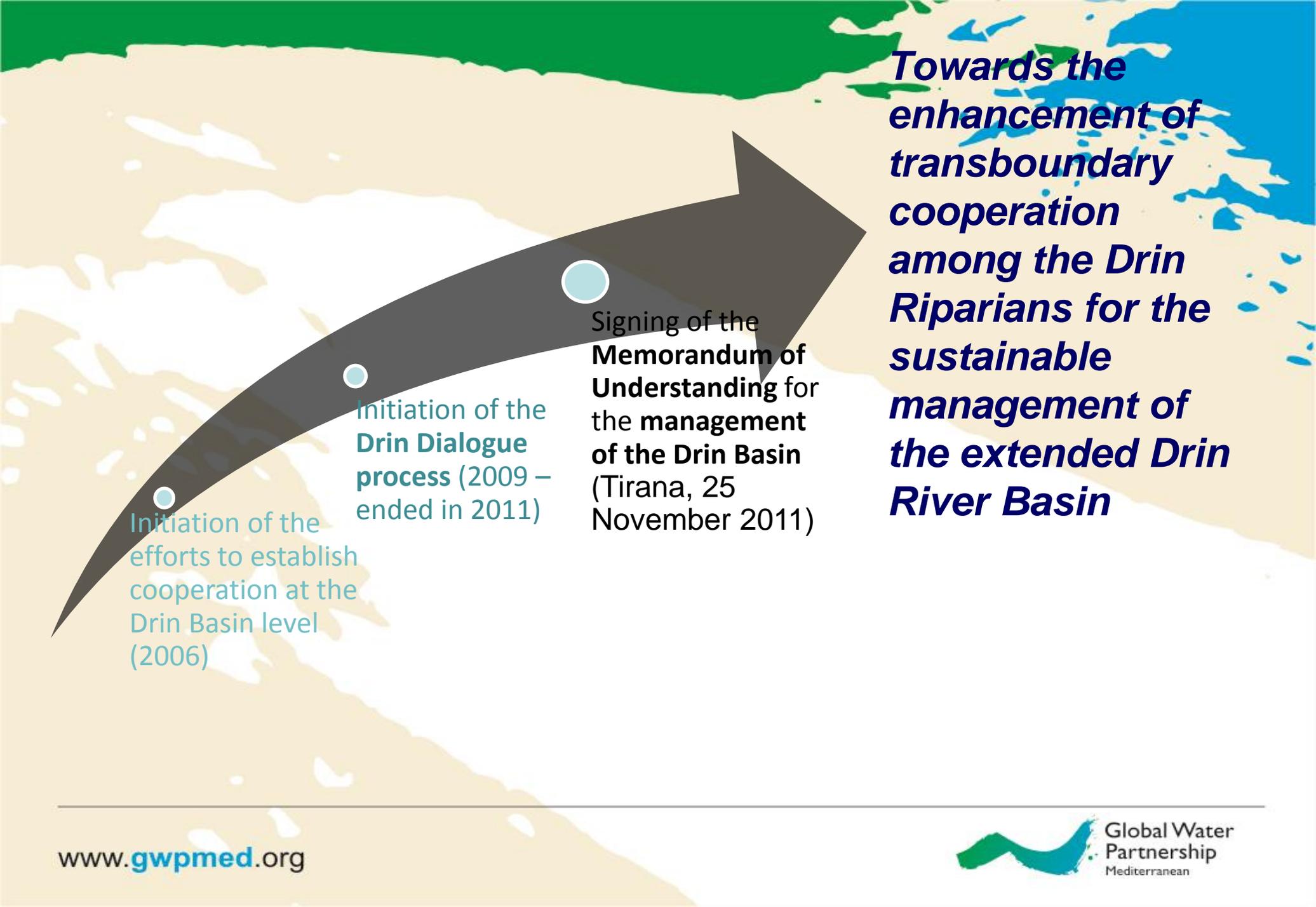
GEF is supporting Drin cooperation through a Full Size Programme (2013-2017)

## Key facilitating partners

- UNECE has been the key policy driving force
- GWP Med serves as the Drin Core Group Secretariat with technical functions

# Drin Dialogue process

**Main objective:** The development of a **Strategic Shared Vision** among the competent national authorities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin basin.

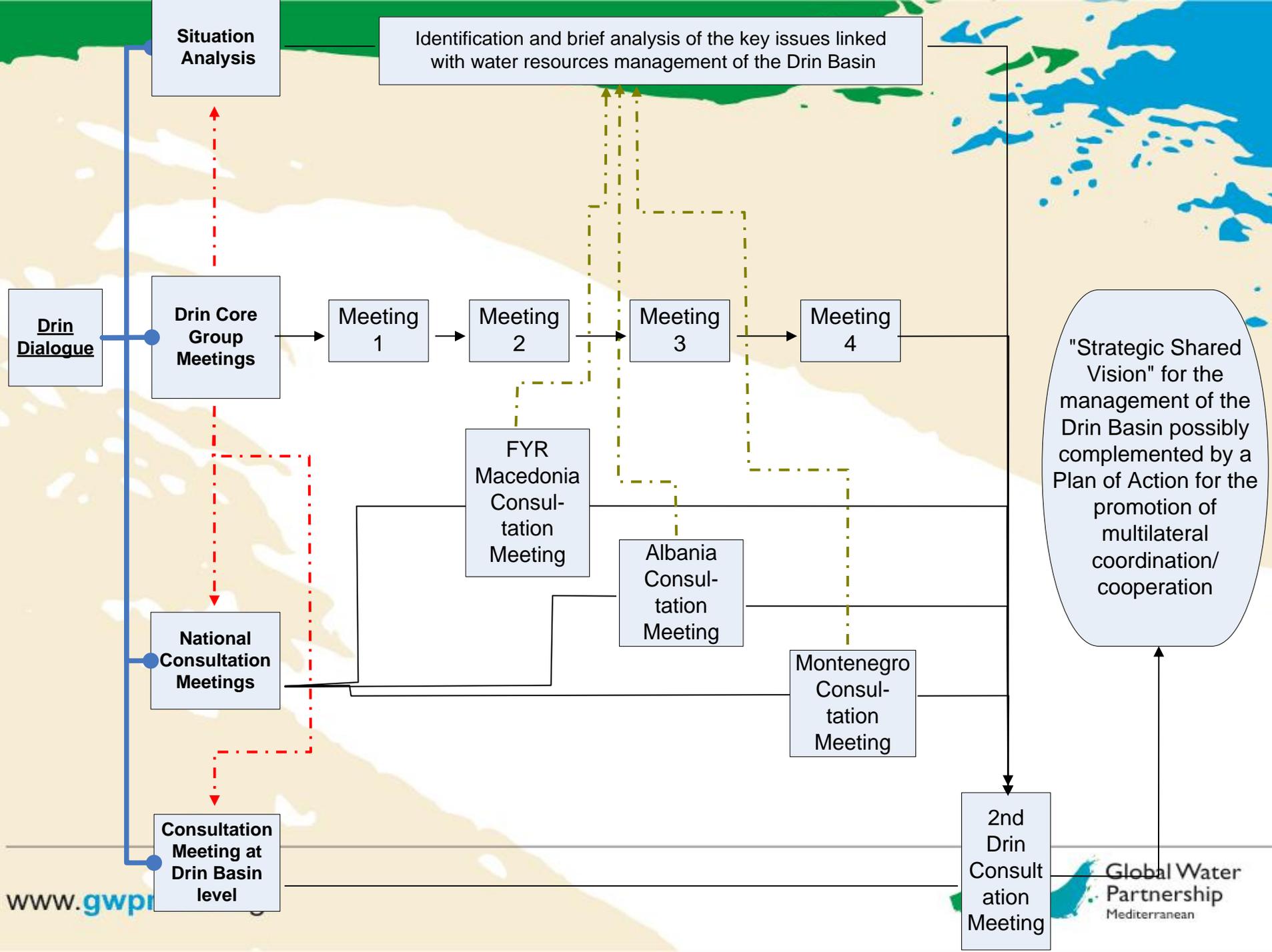


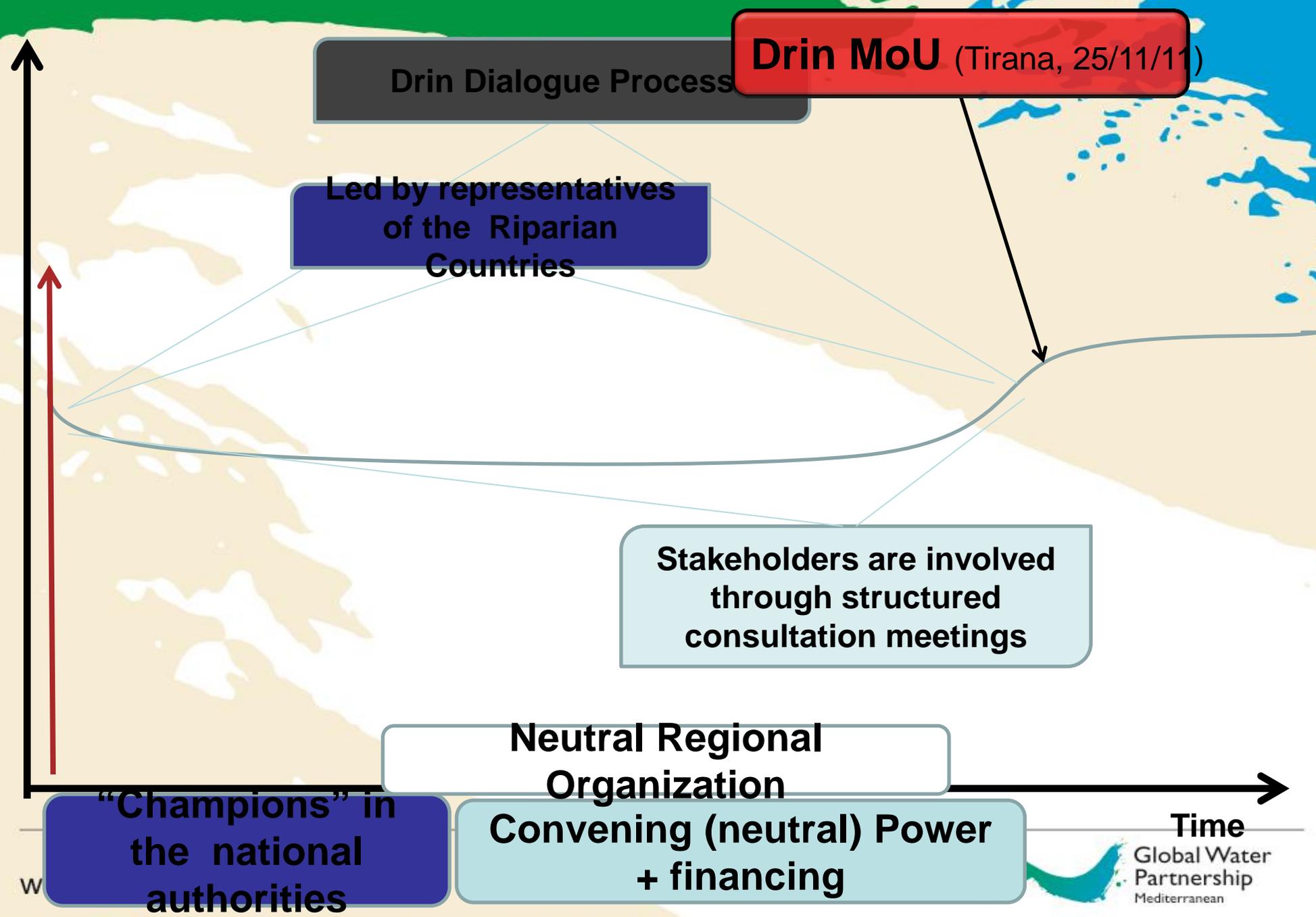
***Towards the  
enhancement of  
transboundary  
cooperation  
among the Drin  
Riparians for the  
sustainable  
management of  
the extended Drin  
River Basin***

Initiation of the  
efforts to establish  
cooperation at the  
Drin Basin level  
(2006)

Initiation of the  
**Drin Dialogue  
process** (2009 –  
ended in 2011)

Signing of the  
**Memorandum of  
Understanding** for  
the management  
of the Drin Basin  
(Tirana, 25  
November 2011)





**Drin MoU** (Tirana, 25/11/11)

**Drin Dialogue Process**

Led by representatives of the Riparian Countries

Stakeholders are involved through structured consultation meetings

Neutral Regional Organization

Convening (neutral) Power + financing

“Champions” in the national authorities

Time

W

# Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)



# Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)

**Objective / Shared Vision:** “*The Parties commit to promote joint action for the coordinated integrated management of the shared water resources in the Drin Basin, as a means to safeguard and restore to the extent possible the ecosystems and the services they provide, and to promote sustainable development across the Drin Basin*”

THE DRIN:  
A STRATEGIC SHARED VISION

Memorandum of Understanding  
for the Management of the Extended Transboundary  
Drin Basin

Preamble

1. *Mindful* of the Ohrid Declaration of 18 April 2011 in which we, the water and/or environment competent Ministers of the Drin Riparians (hereinafter, the “Ministers”) committed to negotiate and adopt a Shared Vision document on the coordinated management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin (hereinafter the “Drin Basin”);
2. *Expressing* our political will towards basin-wide mutual understanding in water management as a precondition for cooperation towards sustainable development;
3. *With full appreciation* of the work of the Drin Core Group whose establishment in 2009 signalled the initiation of the Dialogue among the stakeholders for the management of the Drin Basin (Drin Dialogue), and *taking fully into consideration* the outcomes of the Drin Dialogue;
4. *Confirming* our commitment to sustainable development in the Drin Basin that can be brought about in a coherent way through transboundary cooperation, in accordance with the principles of the European Union integration process;
5. *Aware* that the Drin River is the connecting agent of an extended shared watershed, including a number of shared water bodies and an adjacent sea, the Adriatic, linking these into a hydrologic system that supports a variety of ecosystems within the Drin Basin;
6. *Considering* that the Drin Basin is of international importance, due to its morphology and biological diversity, including the habitats within its Sub-Basins that are vital for

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Minister  
Fátmir Mediu

Minister  
Abdilaqim Ademi

Deputy Minister  
Velizar Vojnovic

Deputy Minister  
Ilir Mirena

Special Secretary  
Andreas Andreadakis

# Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)

*Provides the political framework for cooperation*

*Defines the context of cooperation*

**MoU  
Governing Body**

### Meeting of Parties

Ministers responsible for water and environmental management

**Coordinating Body**

### Drin Core Group

- Ministries from Riparians responsible for water and environmental management
- Prespa Park Management Committee
- Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee
- Lake Skadar-Shkoder Commission
- UNECE
- Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean
- Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development

*Drin Core Group  
Secretariat*

Expert  
Working  
Group on  
WFDI

Expert  
Working  
Group on  
MIE

Expert  
Working  
Group  
on  
BE

# **Action Plan for the implementation of the MoU for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin**

- 1. Enhancement of coordination mechanisms among the Parties**
- 2. Enhancement of the knowledge basis about the Drin Basin**
- 3. Improvement of information exchange through the establishment of a system for regular exchange of relevant information among the competent authorities of each Party**
- 4. Enhancement of cooperation in the field of flood risk preparedness, management and mutual support**
- 5. Institutional strengthening in the field of integrated water resources management**
- 6. Promotion of public participation and stakeholders engagement**

## GEF project “Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin”

- Approved by the GEF Council and endorsed by the GEF CEO
- UNDP is the implementing agency and GWP-Med (GWP) and UNECE the executing partners.
- GEF project:
  - will serve the implementation of the MoU
  - is tightly linked to the existing institutional setting
  - activities are directly linked with the activities in the Action Plan.

Implementation is expected to start on early 2015.

## Some lessons learnt

- In politically challenging environments, the preferred way forward is to start with practical/on the ground issues of common concern and gradually build the institutional frameworks
- Full utilisation and integration of existing structures is a prerequisite
- The starting period is always slow and long followed by rapid developments for which provisions need to be in place in advance
- Neutral, international actor(s) is essential for the process, especially for facilitating & maintaining the momentum
- Stakeholders, including civil society, need to be informed and brought into the discussions early in the process
- Funding is crucial for both the process and its follow up

Being a developing case,  
Drin presents a valid option  
for **sharing experiences**,  
**practicing concepts**  
and lessons learned from  
other areas, **applying**  
**innovations** as well as  
**inspiring cooperation**  
in other basins in the  
Mediterranean and beyond

مع خالص شكري  
وامتناني

**Thank you for your attention**

