

**Drin Core Group**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

**03 November 2010  
Ohrid, FYR Macedonia**

**Report of the meeting**

*Within the frameworks of*  
**UNECE Water Convention**  
*and*  
**Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process**

Organized with the support and collaboration of the: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE).

The meeting was financially supported by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

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## A. BACKGROUND – THE CONTEXT FOR THE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE DRIN CORE GROUP MEETING

### THE “EXTENDED” DRIN BASIN (Basin):

A complex water system, linking together lakes, rivers, wetlands and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance.

The “extended” Drin Basin comprises the watersheds of the Prespa<sup>1</sup>, Ohrid and Shkoder<sup>2</sup> Lakes and the Black Drin<sup>3</sup>, White Drin<sup>4</sup>, Drin<sup>5</sup> and Buna/Bojana Rivers.

The Drin River is the “connecting body” of a water system, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance. The water bodies and their watersheds are spread in a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (from this point forward referred to as FYR Macedonia), Montenegro and Kosovo (*UN administered territory under UN Security Council resolution 1244*). Flowing from Lake Ohrid, which itself receives part of its waters from Lake Prespa through underground karstic formations, the Black Drin eventually leaves FYR Macedonia and enters Albania. The White Drin rises in Kosovo and flows into Albania where it meets the Black Drin to form the Drin River. Flowing through Albania, one arm of the Drin joins the Buna/Bojana River (a watercourse which drains Lake Shkoder and, shared between Albania and Montenegro forms part of their border before finally flowing into the Adriatic Sea) near the city of Shkodra and the other arm drains directly into the Adriatic Sea south of Shkodra near the city of Lezhe. Each of these water bodies has a number of tributaries, small rivers and streams. The following table depicts the hydrographic connections:

**Table 1: Shared water bodies in the South Western Balkan Peninsula**

Water bodies	Prespa Lake	Ohrid Lake	Drin River	Shkoder Lake	Buna/Bojana River
Physically interconnected (through surface waters flow)		←————→			
Physically interconnected (through ground-water flow)	←————→				
Shared by:	Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece	Albania, FYR Macedonia	Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo	Albania, Montenegro	

<sup>1</sup> The Prespa basin includes two lakes separated by a naturally formulated narrow strip of land: Macro Prespa and Micro Prespa. From this point forward we will be referred to the system of the two lakes as Prespa.

<sup>2</sup> The Lake is called “Skadar” in Montenegro and “Shkodër” or “Shkodra” and also sometimes “Scutari” in Albania.

<sup>3</sup> The River is called Drin i Zi in Albania and Crn Drim in FYR Macedonia. From now on the English name –Black Drin– will be used to avoid the usage of different names when referred to it.

<sup>4</sup> The River is called Drin i Bardhë in Albania and Beli Drin in Kosovo. From now on the English name –White Drin– will be used to avoid the usage of different names when referred to it.

<sup>5</sup> The River is called Drin i madh or Drini in Albania. From now on the name “Drin” will be used to avoid the usage of different names when referred to it.

**An example of interdependences across countries/territories and sectors.**

The Drin regional transboundary system is a fine example that illustrates the interdependences created between different uses (agriculture, hydropower generation, industry, fisheries, urban, tourism etc.) in four major inter-connected inland water bodies and a receiving sea (the Adriatic), and a number of countries with, many times, different priorities and interests. It can also be used to illustrate the complexity of the management of water resources in the region which goes beyond the possible achievement of a suitable and effective management in a single sovereign state.

**A system extending across national boundaries, being managed through a series of quite different and often incoherent management approaches.**

The riparian countries are in different stages of development. In most of the cases, a history of fragmented, sometimes overlapping or even contradictory legislation, generally weak environmental administration, limited financial resources as well as low public participation and awareness, also affects the current situation. Non-sustainable management of the environment and natural resources as a result of struggling for economic growth also contributes to reality. Nevertheless, the policies as well as their legal and institutional frameworks are undergoing a revision process driven mainly by the EU accession prospect. The riparian countries that are not EU members have all declared accession to the EU to be their main strategic goal, thus accepting the EU Sustainable Development Strategy as a guiding framework for their development. This is the main political driver for changes in these riparian countries. This process runs on a country by country basis depending on the individual fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. Evidently, re-organisation and furthermore a full approximation to EU standards will need time and resources.

**Cooperation among countries at the sub-Basin level has been initiated, demonstrating the political will of the Governments.**

Importantly, a level of cooperation is already in place for the three Lakes; Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder/Skadar. Related Agreements have been signed by the littoral countries.

**The assistance of the International Community.**

The international community has greatly assisted towards this direction and remains active in the region through financing or implementation of a series of projects on a number of water-related themes and sectors. Moreover the, EU accession prospect driven, on-going reforms in the countries will gradually lead to a *de facto* harmonized legal framework. In addition, initiatives such as the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and the UNECE Water Convention are facilitating the creation of a "common vision" among the stakeholders of the riparian countries. The GEF's engagement in Ohrid (completed), Prespa and Shkoder (on-going), creates the conditions for the enhancement of cooperation towards the integrated management of the Basin.

**Nevertheless, cooperation among countries at the Basin level has not been initiated yet.**

However, little action has been taken for the coordination among the countries for the management of the System's rivers (the Drin River and its tributaries, the Black Drin and White Drin, and Buna/Bojana Rivers) as well as for the "extended" Drin Basin itself. The coordinated management of this inter-connected hydrological system, using the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), will have positive effects in the Basin as well as in the adjacent coastal area of the Adriatic Sea (an area of special focus also for the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem), and be beneficial for the sustainable development in the entire region. Relevant examples of cooperation exist in the European continent which can be of inspiration for the way forward in the Drin River system (Danube, Rhine, Sava River basins).

The Drin Basin Dialogue has its roots in the regional dialogue for transboundary water resources management in SEE under the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process as well as the UNECE Water Convention, supported by GEF IW:LEARN II; A **Consultation Meeting on Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin** jointly organized by the Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, UNECE and GWP-Med in Tirana, Albania, 24 November 2008 with the financial support of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, gathered key stakeholders from all riparian countries including representatives of the water competent ministries. The meeting gave a mandate to the Partners in the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and the UNECE to facilitate the initiation of a consultation process among key stakeholders at the national and transboundary levels towards the establishment of a Shared Vision for the coordinated and sustainable management of the Drin basin.

This consultation process, the **Drin Dialogue, was formally launched** during a meeting organized on **1 December 2009, in Podgorica, Montenegro** (Podgorica Meeting / 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting) with the support and collaboration of the Government of Montenegro, the UNECE, GWP-Med and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), and the financial support of the Swedish EPA. The meeting brought together representatives of the water resources management competent Ministries of Albania, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro as well as the existing joint Commissions/Committees in the sub-basins. It was decided that the UNECE and the GWP-Med will provide assistance, facilitating the implementation of the Drin Dialogue. UNDP actively supports the Drin dialogue process by providing technical support and methodologies for the development of the Drin transboundary assessment. In the same time UNDP together with all the partners has initiated the development of the new GEF International waters project for the Drin basin.

The following were among the decisions of the Podgorica meeting:

- The **aim** of the **Drin Dialogue** is to develop a Shared Vision for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin and to explore ways towards enhancing transboundary cooperation in this regard, in compliance with the provisions of the UNECE Water Convention and other related multi-lateral Agreements, as well as the EU Water Framework Directive. The Dialogue will be conducted within the frameworks of the UNECE Water Convention and the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process. Activities implemented and to be developed in support of the Drin Dialogue contribute directly to and are part of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative and of the GEF Med Partnership.
- The **Drin Dialogue involves** in a coordinated and structured consultation process the competent Ministries of the Drin Basin riparians (Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro) with competence on water resources management, the joint Commissions/Committees in place in the sub-basins (Prespa Park Management Committee, Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee, Lake Skadar-Shkoder Commission) and key stakeholders at national and transboundary levels.
- For the communication and cooperation among the riparian countries and the key stakeholders and for the coordination and the facilitation of implementation of the Drin Dialogue, an informal structure under the name **Drin Core Group (DCG)** is formed. As decided, the DCG will comprise of duly nominated representatives (“focal points”) of the:
  1. Competent Ministries of the riparian countries: Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania; Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climatic Change, Greece; Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the FYR Macedonia; Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment, Montenegro; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro; Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo

2. Joint Commissions/Committees in place in the sub-basins of the Drin Basin, namely the: Prespa Park Management Committee; Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee; Lake Skadar-Shkoder Commission
3. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
4. Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), as the secretariat of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process (GWP-Med will also serve as the Secretariat of the DCG providing technical and administrative support in cooperation with the existing secretariats of the sub-basins)
5. Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)

The European Commission, Swedish EPA, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Global Environment Facility (GEF) will be invited to participate as observers. Any other parts could be co-opted as members or invited as observers on the decision of the Drin Core Group.

A project supporting the Drin Dialogue started on 15 May 2010 and will last about 15 months, until 30 July 2011. ***The project shares the same aims with the Drin Dialogue and is financially supported by the Swedish EPA.***

The envisaged outputs of this project are:

- Organization of the Drin Core Group (DCG) Meetings;
- Preparation of a Situation Analysis - to identify the key issues and problems linked with water resources management as well as identify the key stakeholders at the national and transboundary levels and feed in the Consultation process;
- Three (3) National Consultation Meetings (FYR Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro) and one (1) Transboundary Consultation Meeting at the Drin Basin level;
- A “Strategic Shared Vision” document for the management of the Drin Basin and a Plan of Action for the promotion of multilateral coordination and cooperation.

## **THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DRIN CORE GROUP MEETING**

Based on this background the **second meeting of the Drin Core Group was organized on 3 November 2010, in Ohrid FYR Macedonia** with the support and collaboration of: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee and Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE). The meeting was financially supported by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

The Meeting discussed the following:

- Outcomes of the National Consultation in FYR Macedonia (2 November 2010): experience gained to be used in the upcoming national consultation meetings under the Drin Dialogue; main managerial issues identified with regard to the Drin sub-basins extending in FYR Macedonia.
- Preparation of the Drin Situation Analysis; progress achieved, and next steps.
- Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins.
- Upcoming activities within the Drin Dialogue; UNECE and GWP-Med informed the DCG about developments and next steps and received advice and input.
- Preparation of a Project Identification Form for a GEF supported project for the management of the Drin Basin. A draft framework including the structure, aims, objectives and components of such a project was presented by UNDP; the DCG discussed this and provided input.

The Agenda of the meeting is given in Annex I. The list of participants is given in Annex II.

## ***B. MINUTES IN BRIEF***<sup>6</sup>

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The Meeting was co-chaired by Bo Libert (Regional Adviser on Environment, UN Economic Commission for Europe) and Michael Scoullos (Chairman, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean).

### ***Agenda item 1. Opening – Welcome***

### ***Agenda item 2. Tour de table – Opening brief statements by the members of the Drin Core Group***

Bo Libert welcomed the members of the Drin Core Group (DCG) as well as the other participants and invited Dejan Panovski (Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia / Secretariat of the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee) to address the DCG Meeting.

Dejan Panovski welcomed the participants on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia and the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee. He expressed his satisfaction with regard to the outcomes of the National Consultation Meeting –the first in the series of such meetings under the Drin Dialogue- that took place the previous day (2 November 2010) in the same venue and confirmed once again the commitment of the Ministry to the Initiative.

Sajmir Hoxha, (Director of Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania) expressed the firm commitment of his Ministry to the Drin Dialogue towards the establishment of a Shared Vision for the management of the Drin Basin. He underlined the importance of an eventual GEF financed project that will contribute to the implementation of this Shared Vision.

Illir Kraja (Secretary of the Shkoder/Skadar Lake Commission) explained that he joined the Secretariat of the Shkoder/Skadar Lake Commission in the period after the first DCG meeting (Podgorica, 1 December 2010); he added that he was particularly pleased to be part of the Group and is looking forward to be further informed in detail about and contribute effectively in the Drin Dialogue.

Milan Vogrin (Member of the Executive Bureau of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development) emphasized on MIO-ECSDE's commitment, made at the 1st Drin Core Group, to support the dialogue at regional level, to contribute in establishing a common understanding and shared vision and in enhancing the ability and capacity of its NGO members and other collaborating NGOs in order to act in an effective and constructive way.

### ***Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda***

Bo Libert presented the draft Agenda of the meeting. The draft Agenda was adopted by the DCG.

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<sup>6</sup> Prepared by Dimitris Faloutsos, Global Water Partnership Mediterranean

**Agenda item 4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group meeting**

The DCG adopted the Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> DCG meeting that took place in Podgorica, Montenegro on 1 December 2009.

**Agenda item 5. Purpose of the meeting**

Bo Libert expressed his satisfaction about the progress achieved so far with regard to the Drin Dialogue activities. He underlined the importance of the DCG as a Forum for the representatives of the Ministries of the riparian countries responsible for water resources management and of the existing joint bodies, to discuss and decide on issues related to the Drin Dialogue as well as on the follow up steps towards the enhancement of cooperation among the riparian countries.

He presented the purpose of the meeting i.e. to review the progress achieved within the Drin Dialogue, discuss the outcomes of the FYR Macedonian National Consultation Meeting (Ohrid, 2 November 2010), discuss forthcoming activities within the Drin Dialogue as well as prospects with regard to activities towards enhanced cooperation. With regard to the latter he referred to the draft GEF Project Identification Form (PIF) that would be discussed later that day as a first step towards a GEF full size project, in accordance to the request expressed by the countries to the UNDP (in the Consultation Meeting on Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin, Tirana, Albania, 24 November 2008).

**Agenda item 6. Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins**

Sajmir Hoxha referred to the floods occurred in January 2010 in the Shkoder/Skadar Lake area that had detrimental effects to both Albanian and Montenegrin parts of the sub-basin. Being partially an outcome of water releases from the upstream dams in Drin River, natural disasters of this kind demonstrate the urgent need for improved cooperation among the Drin riparian countries.

Mr. Hoxha spoke about the efforts of the Albanian government towards a more efficient water resources management. These are crystallized in the preparation of a draft law on water resources that has been prepared under CARDS; this law will transpose on a voluntary basis the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the legal framework of the country. A decree regarding the preparation of river basin management plans in accordance to the EU WFD will follow. Another concrete activity in this regard is the planned for 2011 reform of the Ministry and the establishment of a Directorate that will deal with water resources management issues. Currently, these issues are dealt with at the Sector level within the Ministry.

He referred to developments regarding cooperation with neighboring countries in the field of water resources management in the shared sub-basins of the Drin Basin. In Shkoder/Skadar Lake, cooperation with Montenegro is advancing. There is basin management related information exchange between the countries while a new MoU was



signed on June 2010 by the two Ministers of Environment. Albania has been discussing with Kosovo the planned, by both parties, developmental activities in the basin as well as the existing related concerns. The Ministers of Environment of Albania and FYR Macedonia have met to discuss issues related to the management of shared water bodies. The trilateral agreement among Albania, Greece and FYR Macedonia signed on February 2010, formalized the cooperation of the three countries for the management of Prespa.

Mr. Hoxha mentioned that management of the Drin Basin is among the priorities of Albania. Discussions with Japan and the World Bank for the provision of assistance in this regard are on-going.

Dejan Panovski underlined the importance of cooperation among the riparian countries for the joint management of the Basin. The floods in Shkoder/Skadar area were used as an example by Mr. Panovski to stress the need for enhanced cooperation. ELEM, the FYR Macedonian electricity company, had had to reduce significantly the flow of water from Ohrid to Black Drin as a precautionary measure; although this action had positive effects with regard to the flood incident downstream, it led to the raising of the water level in the Lake Ohrid by 50 cm affecting negatively the anthropogenic and natural environment.

Mr. Panovski referred also to the plans for the construction of small hydropower plants, underlining the need for coordinated action at the basin level to address issues stemming from the use of water for electricity generation.

Arian Merolli (Albanian representative in the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee) informed about the meetings between the Albanian and the FYR Macedonian side with regard to the management of fisheries in Lake Ohrid. He also referred to the efforts for the UNESCO Heritage site status –the FYR Macedonian side is designated as such- to be extended also to the Albanian side of the watershed.

Viktor Subotic (Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection, Montenegro / Lake Skadar-Shkoder Integrated Ecosystem Management Project) referred to the different activities with regard to the management of Shkoder/Skadar Lake in the framework of the on-going GEF supported project. In addition, he referred to the upcoming pilot project for the preparation of a combined IWRM and ICZM plan in the Buna/Bojana watershed in the framework of the GEF Med Partnership. He underlined the significance of the on-going and planned activities within the framework of the Drin Dialogue and the planned GEF project, providing the coordinating framework for activities in the different sub-basins.

Evelina Stamouli (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece) stressed the importance of the Drin Dialogue. She referred to the trilateral agreement between Albania, FYR Macedonia and Greece on the management of Prespa basin, signed on February 2010, and the fact that the EC is also a signatory party.

Fatlje Buza (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo) informed the DCG that the preparation of a river basin management plan in line with the EU WFD for the White Drin has been initiated. The process for the characterization of the basin has started. Ms. Buza stressed the willingness of the Ministry for Kosovo to cooperate with the Drin riparian countries under the Drin Dialogue.

### **Agenda item 7.1 Drin Dialogue – Setting the framework for the discussion**

Dimitris Faloutsos (Programme Coordinator for SEE, GWP-Med) made a presentation about the Drin Dialogue. The presentation included an extended introduction about the Drin Dialogue consultation process (its background, aims, objectives, set of activities and timeframe) as well as about the Drin Core Group (its overall objective, scope/specific objectives, synthesis, means to deliver results) for the benefit of the Kosovar delegation that had not participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> DCG.

Mr. Faloutsos informed the meeting about the finished and upcoming activities. The FYR Macedonian National Consultation meeting –the first of the four under the Drin Dialogue– was organized on 2 November 2010 in Ohrid; a discussion document based on the initial findings of the on-going Situation Analysis provided the framework for the discussions. Two additional National Consultation Meetings, in Albania and Montenegro, will be organized in the following months in Tirana and Podgorica, respectively. A consultation meeting at transboundary level will be organized in Tirana. The Situation Analysis outcomes will each time provide the basis for the discussions leading towards the preparation of a Shared Strategic Vision for the management of the Basin.

Mr. Faloutsos referred to the preparation of a GEF supported project for the Drin Basin, guided by UNDP in cooperation with UNECE and GWP-Med, as an opportunity to address the issues to be identified through the Drin Dialogue. He added that the Project Identification Form (PIF) will be submitted for approval to the GEF upon its preparation; a Draft PIF, already disseminated to the members of the Drin Core Group would be discussed later on during the meeting.

The presentation is found in Annex III.

### **Agenda item 7.2 Drin Dialogue – Drin Situation Analysis.**

Dimitris Faloutsos presented the developments with regard to the Situation Analysis:

- Detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) has been prepared based on the ToR template provided by the UNDP;
- A zero Draft of the Situation Analysis, providing the basis for further work, has been prepared based on the existing information from past work (Status Paper, 2008) as well as additional updated information;
- The part of the Situation Analysis referring to FYR Macedonia has been drafted and was the basis for the preparation of the FYR Macedonian NCM discussion document. Existing information gaps are attributed to the fact that information about the Drin sub-basins in the country is dispersed and incomplete as well as to some hesitation of some national institutions to share information. The draft will be revised on the basis of the outcomes of the National Consultation Meeting and additional information that is expected to be provided by scientific institutes such as the Hydrobiological Institute and GTZ (technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning);
- Work for the preparation of the part of the Situation Analysis referring to Albania has been initiated; about 80% of it is already prepared. The information gaps are to be assessed. The findings will be validated during the Albanian NCM.

- Work for Montenegro will be initiated soon.

Bo Libert mentioned that some conclusions with regard to the transboundary issues in the Drin Basin will be extracted through the existing work for the Situation Analysis and discussed during the next (3<sup>rd</sup>) DCG.

### **Agenda item 7.3. Drin Dialogue – National Consultation in FYR Macedonia**<sup>7</sup>

Michael Scoullos made an introduction about the FYR Macedonian NCM (2 November 2010). The meeting was well attended; the vast majority of the stakeholders in the part of the Drin basin that extends to FYR Macedonia were represented. Stakeholders discussed openly the water resources related management issues as well as their aspirations with regard to the future state in the basin in terms of environment and development. A strong political support to the Drin Dialogue was expressed by H.E. Mr. Nexhati Jakupi, Minister of Environment and Physical Planning as well as by H.E. Mr. Erwan Fouere on behalf of the European Commission. The meeting received extended coverage by media<sup>8</sup>.

The discussion was facilitated by a background document circulated prior to the meeting as well as by the use of a conceptual mapping software; the stakeholders could see, in real time through an overhead projector, their input recorded. During the consultation the stakeholders were asked to elaborate on what makes development unsustainable as well as to envisage the future in terms of development in the area. The former enabled the discussion with regard to the basin management issues and problems; the latter enabled the discussion about the vision with regard to the management of the basin in the future. A similar background document will be prepared and the same approach will be used for conducting the up-coming National Consultation Meetings using also as input information the conclusions from previous meetings.

Mr. Scoullos referred to the main issues identified with regard to the Drin sub-basins extending in the country; the discussion during the NCM largely confirmed and enriched the findings included in the background document. Mr. Scoullos underlined that the issues identified may guide the future management of the sub-basins extending in FYR Macedonia. Some of these such as, floods, groundwater resources management, water balance to be developed as a tool for informed water resources management, biological integrity, could be the unifying elements among the countries regarding a shared vision for the management of the “extended” Drin Basin.

Answering a question made by Sajmir Hoxha about what have been the critical points for the success of the consultation meeting in Ohrid in order to use them for the preparation of the Albanian National Consultation Meeting, Dimitris Faloutsos indicated the following three elements:

1. The very good and balanced representation of the different stakeholders groups in the sub-basins as an outcome of the coordinated action between the GWP-Med and Dejan

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<sup>7</sup> The Report of the National Consultation in FYR Macedonia is given in a file that accompanies the current Report.

<sup>8</sup> Dejan Panovsky informed the meeting that the National Consultation Meeting was the headline in the news that day, in the major television and newspapers in the country.

Panovksi from the side of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia;

2. The clear political support provided by the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning of FYR Macedonia who publically underlined the importance of the Drin Dialogue process.

3. The high visibility of the meeting through the Mass media.

#### **Agenda Item 7.4. Drin Dialogue - Next steps and timeframe**

Following a short discussion, the meeting decided that:

- the Albanian National Consultation Meeting and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting to be organized in Tirana during the last week of January; 27-28 January were the dates proposed.

- the Montenegrin National Consultation Meeting and the 4<sup>th</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting to be organized in Podgorica during the last week of February.

#### **Agenda Item 8. A coordinated Civil Society contribution for an effective Drin Dialogue.**

Thomais Vlachogianni informed the DCG about MIO-ECSDE's plan to empower the NGOs in the Drin Basin so as to enhance their capacity to meaningfully participate and effectively contribute to the Drin Dialogue. This will be achieved through a series of workshops (organized back-to-back with the national consultations and Core Group meetings), which will provide the opportunity to NGOs to establish an informed understanding about integrated river or lake basin management, as well as, through awareness raising and communication activities on the developments regarding the Drin Dialogue. Ms. Vlachogianni mentioned that the first of these regional workshops entitled "Sustainable management of river and lake basins: Empowering NGOs for a coordinated effective involvement" would be organized the day following the 2<sup>nd</sup> DCG meeting (4 Nov 2010) in Ohrid.

Sajmir Hoxha welcomed the idea stressing that it is an important activity given the fact that civil society participation is very low in most of the riparian countries and that existing NGOs are not very active or competent in the field of the environment.

Ms. Vlachogianni asked the representatives of the Ministries to facilitate in identifying additional NGOs to the ones already listed by MIO-ECSDE NGOs in the Drin riparian countries.

Ms. Vlachogianni asked the representatives of the Ministries to facilitate in identifying additional NGOs to the ones already listed by MIO-ECSDE NGOs in the Drin riparian countries.

She also stressed the need for enhancement of synergies and impact with other relevant to the Drin Dialogue regional processes. In that respect MIO-ECSDE's actions in support of the Drin Dialogue will be making the direct link with two major Mediterranean initiatives, in which MIO-ECSDE is a key partner:

- i. The UNEP/MAP-GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (the MedPartnership), where MIO-ECSDE is responsible for the

- meaningful participation of civil society in the implementation of the project and the overall strengthening of civil society in the Mediterranean.
- ii. The ENPI Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme (CB/MEP) which focuses on environmental integration and capacity building and aims through targeted activities within the partner countries to increase the capacities of all stakeholders (administrations – national, sub national, local authorities – NGOs, private sector, etc.) so as to effectively contribute to the de-pollution of the Mediterranean by 2020.

### **Agenda Item 9. Preparation of a Drin Project supported by GEF**

Michael Scoullos made an introduction of this Agenda Item. UNDP, in cooperation with UNECE and GWP-Med, has initiated the development of a new GEF International Waters project for the Drin basin. A first Draft GEF Project Identification Form elaborating on the concept of the project would be presented later during the meeting by UNDP for the consideration of DCG; the timeframe for the preparation of the PIF, its endorsement by the countries and subsequent submission for approval to the GEF would be also discussed.

Andrea Merla (Consultant UNDP/GEF) presented the draft Drin Project Identification Form (PIF) providing the overall framework of the project, how it fits to the GEF strategic priorities, its aims, objectives, expected outcomes and outputs, structure etc.

The overall objective of the proposed project is to promote collective joint management of the water resources of the extended transboundary Drin River Basin, including coordination mechanisms among the various sub-basin Commissions and Committees (Prespa Park Management Committee; Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee; Lake Skadar- Shkoder Commission) to preserve the integrity of the basin ecosystems and of the services they provide. The more specific project objective is to create the enabling environment for establishing basin-wide transboundary cooperation arrangements building upon the bilateral agreements for the management of the watersheds of Lake Ohrid, and Lake Shkoder and the respective trilateral agreement for Lake Prespa. The project will strive to replicate the successes of the prior or ongoing GEF sponsored initiatives in the three Lakes scaling up to develop an integrated water resources management Strategy for the transboundary Drin River basin. The project would assist the Governments of Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro as well as Kosovo and to a certain extent Greece in building and further improving institutional capacity for effective watershed management, taking a multi-sector approach, and supporting an economically and environmentally sustainable energy policy, agricultural development, natural resources conservation and biodiversity protection. By supporting the development of a multilateral institutional framework and a Strategic Action Program for the Drin watershed, the project will catalyze donor investments and sustained international support.

The proposed project will be structured around five components: (i) Consolidating a common knowledge base (ii) Building a transboundary cooperation framework (iii) Institutional strengthening for Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) (iv)

Demonstration of technologies and practices for IWRM and ecosystem management (v) Stakeholder Involvement, and Communication Strategies.

The outcomes and outputs of each component are contained in the presentation made by Mr. Merla (Annex IV).

The main conclusions and points made in the discussion that followed the presentation included:

- The proposed project builds on the outcomes of the Drin Dialogue.
- The proposed project should respond to national priorities related to water resources management.
- Dejan Panovski stressed the importance of activities that will assist the countries in establishing in the long term a joint monitoring programme.
- Sajmir Hoxha asked for special attention to be given to pilot activities since these will assist increasing the capacity in the countries to address specific issues of importance. In addition these may assist raise awareness on such issues since they usually are activities of high visibility.
- Viktor Subotic found the presented activities to fit well with the on-going GEF supported project in Shkoder/Skadar Lake and that they generally built on the outcomes of the on-going GEF projects in the Drin sub-basins. He proposed that a pilot activity should focus on the nutrient pollution reduction. He briefly went through the specific comments to the PIF that the Montenegrin Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment had prepared; these would be sent in writing.
- The linkages with the EU WFD, the driving force in the countries in terms of the legal framework for water resources management, should be made more visible, possibly through a pilot activity on the implementation of the Directive.
- Beneficiary countries should propose specific ideas for pilot projects.
- The beneficiary countries, according to the GEF rules, are Albania, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro. Greece and Kosovo are not eligible, nevertheless their support expressed by a related letter will be an asset.
- Efforts should be made to have involve the EC in the project.
- Steps to be followed for the preparation of the project proposal and submission to the GEF Secretariat are the following:
  - a. The countries submit their comments regarding the first Draft PIF in writing. In addition the countries provide information to be used for the preparation of the PIF – to be included in the “justification / baseline status” part of the PIF.
  - b. Comments and first input are incorporated by the UNDP international consultant (Andrea Merla) and the second Draft PIF is prepared and disseminated to the countries for a second round of comments (until 15 December – provided that information is timely provided by the countries).
  - c. Countries submit their comments in writing; in addition the countries identify the level of their in-kind co-financing to the project (until 30 December – provided that input for the preparation of the first draft PIF (steps a1 and a2) is timely provided by the countries).
  - e. PIF is prepared by the UNDP international consultant on the basis of the comments received by the countries (first half of January 2010).
  - f. If there are no pending issues, PIF is endorsed by the countries -The countries provide an endorsement letter from the National GEF Operational Focal points.

- g. PIF is submitted to the GEF for approval upon the receipt of the endorsement letters by the countries (January 2011). A Project Preparation Grant (PPG) request will be submitted along with the PIF to the GEF; a project preparation phase of 8-12 months will be requested.
- All countries reconfirmed their commitment to work on the preparation of a GEF project as means for implementing the Shared Vision that will be developed through the Drin Dialogue.

## Annex I. Agenda of the Drin Core Group Meeting

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**Drin Core Group Meeting**  
**Inex Gorica Hotel, Ohrid**  
**10.00 – 14.30 hrs**  
**3 November 2010**

Chair: *Mr. Bo Libert, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*

Co-Chair: *Mr. Michael Scoullou, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)*

### **1. Opening – Welcome**

- *Mr. Bo Libert, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*

- *Mr. Dejan Panovski, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia / Secretariat of the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee*

### **2. Tour de table – Opening brief statements by the members of the Drin Core Group**

### **3. Adoption of the Agenda**

### **4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group meeting**

### **5. Purpose of the meeting**

### **6. Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<i>The members of the Drin Core Group representing the Drin riparian countries and the existing joint management bodies will briefly present developments with regard to the management of the sub-basins at the national and transboundary level.</i>	

### **7. Drin Dialogue – Developments and upcoming activities**

#### **7.1 Drin Dialogue – Setting the framework for the discussion**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<i>Introduction about the activities and the workplan, followed by information about developments and next steps.</i>	- 1 <sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report - Annex II: "Context of and the activities within the Drin Dialogue"; - 1 <sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report - Annex V: "Drin Dialogue Workflow Diagram"
- Introduction: UNECE and GWP-Med - Discussion (All)	

#### **7.2. Drin Dialogue – Drin Situation Analysis**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<i>The Drin Core Group will discuss the progress achieved and next steps regarding the preparation of the Drin Situation Analysis.</i>	- 1 <sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report – Annex IV. "Drin Situation Analysis Workflow"



- Introduction: GWP-Med - Discussion (All)	Diagram”
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### 7.3. Drin Dialogue – National Consultation in FYR Macedonia

Action	Background
<p><i>The Drin Core Group will discuss the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>outcomes of the National Consultation in FYR Macedonia (2 November 2010) including main issues identified with regard to the Drin sub-basins extending in FYR Macedonia, as well as;</i></li> <li>- <i>experience gained to be used in the upcoming national consultation meetings under the Drin Dialogue.</i></li> </ul> <p>- Introduction: UNECE and GWP-Med - Discussion (All)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agenda Item No.6.2</li> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report – Annex II: “Context of and the activities within the Drin Dialogue”</li> </ul>

### 7.4. Drin Dialogue - Next steps and timeframe

Action	Background
<p><i>A revised Drin Dialogue timeframe to respond to the developments emerged will be discussed in view of being adopted.</i></p> <p>- Introduction: GWP-Med - Discussion (All)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revised Drin Dialogue Workflow Diagram (to be distributed during the meeting)</li> </ul>

## 8. A coordinated Civil Society contribution for an effective Drin Dialogue

Action	Background
<p><i>The Drin Core Group (DCG) will be informed about the plan of MIO-ECSDE to empower the NGOs in the Drin Basin to enhance their capacity to contribute to the effective management of the Drin Basin. The Drin Core Group will be asked to comment and provide input with regard to the planned activities.</i></p> <p>- Introduction: Ms. Thomais Vlachogianni, MIO-ECSDE</p>	<p>The empowerment of NGOs is in line with the commitment of MIO-ECSDE during the 1<sup>st</sup> DCG to enhance NGO capacity to effectively contribute to the management of the Drin.</p>

## 9. Preparation of a Drin Project supported by GEF

Action	Background
<p><i>Pursuant to its related commitment, UNDP, in cooperation with UNECE and GWP-Med, has initiated the development of the new GEF International Waters project for the Drin basin. A first Draft GEF Project Identification Form including the structure, objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project will be presented by UNDP for the Drin Core Group’s consideration and input. The Drin Core Group will discuss a timeframe for the preparation of the PIF, its endorsement by the countries and its submission for approval to the GEF.</i></p> <p>Introduction: Andrea Merla, Consultant, UNDP Discussion: All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft Project Identification Form (attached)</li> <li>- Proposed timeframe for the preparation of the PIF, its endorsement and submission for approval to GEF.</li> </ul>

## Annex II. List of Participants

	Title	NAME	SURNAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION / BODY
<b>Members of the Drin Core Group</b>					
1	Mr.	Sajmir	Hoxha	Director of Biodiversity	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania
2	Mr.	Dejan	Panovski	Secretary LOWC	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning /Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee, FYR Macedonia
3	Ms.	Evelina	Stamouli	International Relations Officer	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece
4	Mr.	Viktor	Subotic	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection, Montenegro / Lake Skadar-Shkoder Integrated Ecosystem Management Project
5	Mr.	Besim	Dobruna	Manager	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo
6	Mr.	Arian	Merolli	Albanian Representative	Lake Ohrid Watershed Commission
7	Mr.	Ilir	Kraja	Secretary	Skadar Lake Commission
8	Mr.	Bo	Libert	Regional Adviser on Environment	UNECE
9	Mr.	Michael	Scoullous	Chairman	GWP-Med
10	Mr.	Milan	Vogrin	Member of the Executive Bureau	MIO-ECSDE
<b>Other Participants</b>					
11	Mr.	Idlir	Gumbardhi	Chief of Water Recourses Sector	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania

12	Mr.	Skender	Hasa	Water Resources Sector	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Kosovo
13	Mr.	Muhamet	Muca	Chief Of Drin-Buna Watershed Agency	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Kosovo
14	Ms.	Fatlje	Buza	Officer for Water Protection-Drim	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo
15	Mr.	Sylejmon	Latifi	Officer for Water Infrastructure	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo
16	Ms.	Ulrika	Stensdotter Blomberg	Senior Scientific Advisor	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
17	Mr.	Dimitris	Faloutsos	Programme coordinator for Southeastern Europe	GWP-Med
18	Ms.	Konstantina	Toli	Programme Officer	GWP-Med
19	Ms.	Thomais	Vlachogianni	Programme Officer	MIO-ECSDE
20	Mr.	Andrea	Merla	Consultant	UNDP/GEF

### **Annex III. Context of and the activities within the Drin Dialogue – Presentation made by Dimitris Faloutsos**

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The presentations are given in a file that accompany the current report

**Annex IV. “Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin” Project Concept for a possible GEF IW Project – Presentation made by Andrea Merla**

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The presentation is given in a file that accompany the current repor