

# **Drin Core Group**

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting**

**06 April 2011  
Tirana, ALBANIA**

## **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
<i>Physically interconnected (through surface waters flow)</i>		←————→			
<i>Physically interconnected (through ground-water flow)</i>	←————→				
<i>Shared by:</i>	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 DIALOGUE**

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, until 30 November 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 3<sup>RD</sup> DRIN CORE GROUP MEETING**

The **third meeting of the Drin Core Group<sup>6</sup> was organized on 6 April 2011, in Tirana Albania** with the support and collaboration of: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) 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:

- Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins.
- Preparation of the Drin Situation Analysis; progress achieved, and next steps.
- Outcomes of the National Consultation in Albania (5 April 2011): the main issues identified with regard to the Drin sub-basins extending in Albania.
- The preparation of the Shared Vision of the riparian countries for the shared management of the extended Drin River Basin and the elements that it should include.
- Developments regarding the preparation of a Drin Project supported by GEF.
- Upcoming activities within the Drin Dialogue.

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

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<sup>6</sup> The second meeting of the Drin Core Group was organized on 3 November 2010, in Ohrid FYR Macedonia.

## ***B. MINUTES IN BRIEF***<sup>7</sup>

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The Meeting was co-chaired by Bo Libert (Regional Adviser on Environment, UNECE) and Michael Scoullos (Chairman, GWP-Med).

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

Sajmir Hoxha (Director of Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania) opened the Drin Core Group (DCG) Meeting by welcoming the members of the DCG as well as the other participants.

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

Mr. Hoxha reaffirmed the strong willingness of his Ministry to cooperate, both at political and technical levels, with the competent Ministries of all riparian countries towards the coordinated management of the Drin Basin. He conveyed to the meeting the personal commitment of the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning, Mr. Fatmir Mediu, in this regard.

Dejan Panovski (Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia/ Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee) stressed out the importance of the Drin Dialogue as a process that stimulates action towards the sustainable management of the Drin Basin. He expressed the firm commitment of his Ministry to the Process.

Ulrika Stensdotter (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency - SEPA) expressed satisfaction on behalf of the SEPA in regard to the up to that point outcomes achieved in the framework of the Drin Dialogue Process.

Marco Keiner (Director, Environment, Housing And Land Management Division, UNECE) underlined the commitment of the UNECE to the Drin Dialogue Process. He pointed out that the Process has contributed to the development of good prospects regarding enhanced regional cooperation.

Milan Vogrin (Member of the Executive Bureau of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development - MIO-ECSDE) expressed the willingness of MIO-ECSDE to assist in the process of establishing a Shared Vision among the riparian countries for the sustainable management of the extended Drin River Basin.

The rest of the members of the Drin Core Group reaffirmed the commitment of the institutions they represent to the Drin Dialogue Process.

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

Bo Libert proposed that Item 8 of the Agenda, Main Issues in the Drin Basin is excluded. His proposal was accepted by the Drin Core Group.

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<sup>7</sup> Prepared by Dimitris Faloutsos and Anna Maria Papaioannou, Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean

Dimitris Faloutsos (Programme Coordinator for SEE, GWP-Med) made a presentation including an extended introduction about the Drin Dialogue consultation process -its background, aims, objectives, set of activities and timeframe- and the project that supports its implementation as well as the Drin Core Group (its overall objective, scope/specific objectives, synthesis, means to deliver results). The presentation aimed to inform the members of the Kosovar delegation that had not participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> DCG Meeting.

*Agenda item 4. Purpose of the meeting*

Bo Libert presented the purpose of the meeting i.e. to review the progress of the management activities in the framework of the Drin Dialogue, discuss the outcomes of the Albanian National Consultation Meeting, discuss the formulation of a Shared Vision document and the implementation of the next steps of the Drin Dialogue Process.

*Agenda item 5. Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins*

Ilir Kraja (Secretary of the Shkoder/Skadar Lake Commission) referred to the Shkoder/Skadar Lake Commission and its work. The Commission is supported by four working groups that constitute mechanisms for the exchange of technical information and coordination of activities of joint interest i.e. Planning and Legal, Monitoring and Research, Communication Outreach and Sustainable Tourism Development and Water Management. Furthermore, the Working Groups are authorized to discuss the preparation and directly oversee the implementation of joint activities within the framework of the GEF/World Bank Lake Shkoder/Skadar Integrated Ecosystem Management Project (LSIEMP). Mr. Kraja explained that the preparation of the “Management Plan for Skadar / Shkoder Lake Managed Nature Reserve” is underway.

Mr. Kraja referred also to the plans for the establishment of a transboundary management reserve in the area and to the actions to enable local stakeholders involvement in the ongoing efforts for water resources management.

Dejan Panovski underlined the wide impact of the National Consultation Meeting in FYR Macedonia that was organized on November 2010 in Ohrid. The meeting contributed in raising awareness regarding the sustainable management of the Drin Basin. He expressed the belief that a gradual up scaling of the activities under the Drin Dialogue will lead to the coordinated management of the Drin sub-basins.

Mr. Panovski referred to the institutional restructuring in the water resources management sector in FYR Macedonia; among others, the Division for the management of the Crni Drim River Basin being one of the three divisions responsible for the management of the three Basin Districts in the country, will be put in place within the following months.

Arian Merolli (Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee) referred to a NATO financed ongoing research in the Lake Prespa and Lake Ohrid sub-basins focusing on the karstic interconnections of the two. Mr. Merolli also mentioned that a State of Environment Report is currently under preparation.

Sajmir Hoxha referred to the devastating floods that occurred in December 2010 in the Shkoder Lake and Buna River region and the valuable assistance offered by the World Bank



in this regard. As the problem is of transboundary nature, a related cooperation agreement was signed between Albania and Montenegro. Furthermore, the intensity of this natural disaster led to the decision to enhance national legal and institutional structure in the fields of both preparing for and addressing the results of disasters.

Mr. Hoxha referred also to the construction of a big hydropower plant in Albania in the Ashta area, close to the Shkoder lake as well as the preparation of a hydrological model for the lake in the framework of the GEF LSIEMP. A reference was also made on the ongoing efforts of Albania and FYR Macedonia to designate the Prespa Lake as a transboundary UNESCO Heritage site.

Evelina Stamouli (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece) referred to the developments regarding the Agreement between Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece and the EU on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area. The Agreement has already been approved by the EU Council and will be subject to voting by the EU Parliament on May. Ms. Stamouli explained that the process of the Agreement entering into force is slightly more complicated than usual due to the fact that the EU participates as an equal member. In addition, Ms. Stamouli informed the DCG that all involved parties have already nominated their representatives to the Prespa Park Management Committee established through the aforementioned agreement.

Fatlilje Buza (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo) informed the DCG that new a water law transposing the EU Water Framework Directive is under preparation. Ms. Buza referred to the water management related twinning projects that focused on the development of a monitoring network according to WFD requirements and the characterization of the Drin River.

Thomie Vlachogianni (MIO-ECSDE) presented briefly the main activities that MIO-ECSDE has undertaken since the last meeting of the Drin Core Group, contributing directly and/or indirectly to a coordinated involvement of civil society, and particularly NGOs, in the Drin Dialogue.

MIO-ECSDE organized a networking meeting in Tirana back-to-back with the National Consultation with representatives from national NGOs to provide information on the Drin Dialogue process and encourage NGOs to participate. MIO-ECSDE has also planned several Communication and awareness raising actions through circulars on the developments regarding the Drin Dialogue via its extensive contact lists and will dedicate one issue of its quarterly newsletter Sustainable Mediterranean to the Drin Dialogue.

Ms. Vlachogianni explained that MIO-ECSDE aims at the enhancement of synergies through actions linking the Drin Dialogue with two major Mediterranean initiatives, in which MIO-ECSDE is a key partner: (a) the UNEP/MAP-GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership), where MIO-ECSDE is responsible for the participation of civil society in the implementation of the project and the overall strengthening of civil society in the Mediterranean and (b) the ENPI Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme (CB/MEP) which focuses on environmental integration and capacity building.

Michael Scoullos (Chairman GWP-Med) informed the DCG about the Buna/Bojana integrated transboundary ICZM and IWRM plan that will be prepared jointly by the UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC, GWP-Med and UNESCO in the framework of the GEF supported MedPartnership Project. Activities are implemented in cooperation with the Albanian Ministry of Environment Forestry and Water Administration and the Montenegrin Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism and will build on other on-going activities in the area: the GEF/WB LSIEMP and the Drin Dialogue. Mr. Scoullos also informed the DCG that GWP-Med has reached an agreement with RENA (Regional Environmental Network for Accession)<sup>8</sup> for the organization of at least two Capacity Building (CB) workshops on different issues related to the implementation of the EU WFD at transboundary level focusing on the Drin Basin. The organization of CB workshops for stakeholders in the Drin Basin will work in synergy with the activities under the Drin Dialogue process towards the achievement of the objectives of the latter. The first CB workshop will be organized back to back with the National Consultation Meeting in Montenegro.

Mr. Scoullos underlined that the GWP-Med as the secretariat of the DCG, in cooperation with the UNECE, assists in the flow of information among the different initiatives and projects at the transboundary and national level aiming to stimulate cooperation and synergy for the benefit towards the accomplishment of the objectives of the Drin Dialogue and the enhancement of transboundary cooperation. In this regard Mr. Scoullos informed the group that under his capacity as the Team Leader of the H2020 Capacity Building / Mediterranean Environments Programme (CB/MEP), he will secure the participation of stakeholders in the Drin Basin, in CB workshops under CB/MEP.

#### *Agenda item 6. Drin Dialogue- Drin Situation Analysis*

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

- 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. There are information gaps; these 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 part of the Situation Analysis referring to Albania has been drafted and was the basis for the preparation of the Albanian NCM discussion document. Information gaps have to be assessed. The draft will be revised on the basis of the outcomes of the National Consultation Meeting.
- Work for the preparation of the part of the Situation Analysis referring to Montenegro has been initiated; about 50% of it is already prepared. The information gaps are to be assessed. The findings will be validated during the Montenegrin NCM.

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<sup>8</sup> RENA is financed by the EU and managed by the European Commission. It has been designed as the successor of the [“Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South East Europe” \(REReP\)](#) (that was initiated under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in January 2000). RENA aims to facilitate exchange of experience and best practice in preparation for accession between the EU Member States and the countries of the Balkan region. It works simultaneously at political level (Ministerial meetings) and at technical level. While Ministerial meetings should provide political commitment and select priorities, the expert technical meetings will work through seminar, trainings and other capacity building activities. The work focuses on four thematic priority areas: (i) Strategic Planning & Investments; (ii) Climate Change; (iii) Cross-Border Cooperation and multilateral agreements; (iv) Implementation and Enforcement. A three year project started in March 2010 to support RENA.

Mr. Faloutsos explained to the DCG that existing information about the Drin sub-basins is either incomplete or dispersed. Taking into account the available through the on-going project exercise means, information is, many times, difficult to be accessed and in addition its validity is difficult to be assessed. The involvement of the ministries participating in the DCG is necessary to overcome these barriers. Taking into account that lack of human resources does not allow the Ministries to contribute in the drafting of the document, their contribution by reviewing the draft will be necessary to guarantee the quality of the work to be produced.

#### Agenda item 7. Drin Dialogue - National Consultation in Albania

Sajmir Hoxha underlined the importance of the Albanian National Consultation Meeting which was well attended (there were more than 120 participants) and received extensive media coverage; the vast majority of the stakeholders groups were represented. The meeting was appreciated by all stakeholders as it provided a forum to discuss issues regarding the Drin Basin management. The positive outcomes were attributed by Mr. Hoxha to the good collaboration between the Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration and GWP-Med.

Mr. Hoxha stressed that the organization of the Albanian National Consultation Meeting raised expectations among the stakeholders for concrete actions towards the sustainable management of the Drin Basin at both national and transboundary levels. With regard to the latter, one of the main messages that came strongly from the side of the stakeholders is the need for the establishment of a joint management body. **Mr. Hoxha informed the DCG about the willingness of the Albanian Government to contribute financially towards that end.**

Mr. Hoxha also referred to the construction of hydropower plants being considered by the Ministry as possible means of controlling flooding events; nevertheless the management of dams has not been such to effectively prevented floods in the recent past.

Marco Keiner informed the Drin Core Group that he joined together with Michael Scoullos the Ministers of Albania, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro in a working lunch, during which all Ministers expressed their willingness to sign the Shared Vision document to be prepared through the Drin Dialogue.

The Albanian Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Sali Berisha accepted the Ministers, Mr. Keiner and Mr. Scoullos for a hearing. The Albanian Prime Minister is fully aware of the Drin Dialogue Process, which he supports; in addition in the presence of the Ministers he stressed the need for the riparian countries to create a Joint Management Body for the management of the Drin. Mr. Keiner mentioned that this management body could possibly derive from the transformation of the Drin Core Group.

Mr. Keiner pointed out that in the short term the main purpose of the riparian countries should be the formulation of a Shared Vision with the view of establishing a GEF project for the management of the extended Drin River Basin. The fact that the Albanian National Consultation Meeting raised awareness and further expectations among politicians with

regard to the joint management of the Drin River Basin increases the responsibility of all involved parts to deliver the expected results.

Michael Scoullos stressed the fact that the Consultation Meeting raised awareness at the political level.

#### Agenda Item 8. Shared Vision document

The DCG discussed the Shared Vision Document (SVD), its possible structure, content and level of endorsement; as originally planned the SVD would be prepared on the basis of the outcomes of the National Consultation Meetings and would be endorsed by the Consultation Meeting at the transboundary level. The main points of the discussion are given below:

The Shared Vision should:

- Reflect the political will of the riparian countries for cooperation in the management of the Drin River Basin;
- Correspond to the expectations of the Drin Basin stakeholders as these have been stated through the National Consultation Meetings;
- Include references to the Water Framework Directive, the UNECE Water Convention as well as other major International Agreements; its principles should be the guiding principles for the coordination of the riparians for the management of the Drin Basin;
- Include references to the sustainable use of water resources;
- List the major issues and the priority actions to address these in the following years;
- Identify the challenges towards the sustainable management of the Drin River Basin as well as opportunities offered by it;
- Provide for the establishment of a joint structure that will serve as a coordination unit among the riparians;
- Be signed by the Ministers possibly with a reference that it will be revised within the year, in order to give the opportunity to the riparian countries to decide on possible changes and additions they believe are necessary to enhance the coordination framework of the Vision and possibly strengthen it to the extent they believe is necessary to ensure the sustainable development of the Drin Basin.

The Draft Shared Vision will be prepared by GWP-Med and UNECE, sent to the DCG members for comments and discussed during the 4<sup>th</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting in Montenegro.

Sajmir Hoxha proposed that the Shared Vision should include provisions that would create the conditions for the future signing of an agreement among the riparians for the management of the Drin and the establishment of a joint management body that will oversee the implementation of the agreement.

The DCG decided to propose to the Ministers of the riparians the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration that will:

- give the mandate to the Drin Core Group to prepare a Shared Vision for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin;
- declare the commitment of the Ministers to negotiate and potentially sign the Shared Vision document.

It was proposed that the Ministerial Declaration be adopted during the forthcoming High level conference on transboundary water resources management that will take place in Ohrid, FYR Macedonia, 18 April 2011.

GWP-Med and UNECE will prepare the document which will then be sent to members of the Drin Core Group for comments and to the countries to agree upon. FYR Macedonia will undertake the task of coordinating the negotiations.

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

Dimitris Faloutsos informed the Drin Core Group that the Project Identification Form (PIF) has been prepared by UNDP with the assistance of UNECE and GWP-Med and endorsed by the GEF operational focal points of Albania, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro. The PIF was submitted on 21 March 2011 and is currently under Technical Review by the GEF secretariat that is expected to provide its answer very soon.

Bo Libert explained that partners should initiate the process for the identification of sources of financing; these would match GEF funds if the project is approved or finance activities in case GEF does not proceed with the approval of the project.

**Agenda Item 10. Drin Dialogue - Next steps and timeframe**

The Drin Core Group agreed on the following timeframe:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting will be held in Montenegro one day after the National Consultation Meeting.
- Drafts of some of the chapters of the Situation Analysis should be prepared by the end of July 2011.
- The final Drin Core Group Meeting will be held in September or early October back to back with the Drin Consultation Meeting at transboundary level.

Marco Keiner proposed that the final Drin Core Group Meeting be held as a side event in the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference, in Astana, Kazakhstan, in September 2011, since the Drin Dialogue Process constitutes a model approach that can be implemented in several basins and should be promoted as such. Mr. Keiner also proposed that the Drin Dialogue Process is highlighted at the global level; in this regard he proposed to include it for discussion in the last preparatory meeting for the RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Michael Scoullou added that the Shared Vision can also be presented as a model of transboundary cooperation for the sustainable management of water resources in the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, which will be held in Marseille in March 2012.

**Agenda Item 11. Wrap up- Any Other Business**

Walter Klemm (Consultant, World Bank) thanked the Drin Core Group for providing information on the Drin Dialogue Process. He explained that the World Bank is preparing a framework project in cooperation with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia that will include two sub-projects for the management of the Drina and Drin River Basin respectively and will seek the financial support of GEF.

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

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**Drin Core Group Meeting**  
**Tirana**  
**6 April 2011**  
**TIRANA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL**  
**Scanderbeg Square, 8, Tirana, ALBANIA**

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

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

**1. Opening – Welcome (10 min)**

*- Mr. Sajmir Hoxha, Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration*

**2. Tour de table – Opening brief statements by the members of the Drin Core Group (15 min)**

**3. Adoption of the Agenda (5 min)**

**4. Purpose of the meeting (10 min)**

**5. Developments regarding management activities in the Drin sub-basins (30 min)**

<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>	

**6. Drin Dialogue – Drin Situation Analysis (30 min)**

<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>  <i>- Introduction: GWP-Med</i> <i>- Discussion (All)</i>	

**7. Drin Dialogue – National Consultation Meeting in Albania (20 min)**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<i>The Drin Core Group will discuss the following:</i> <i>- Outcomes of the National Consultation in Albania (5 April 2011);</i> <i>- Experience gained to be used in the upcoming consultation meetings under the Drin Dialogue.</i>  <i>- Introduction: UNECE and GWP-Med</i> <i>- Discussion (All)</i>	<i>- 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report – Annex II: “Context of and the activities within the Drin Dialogue”</i>

### 8. Shared Vision document (30 min)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<p><i>The Drin Core Group will make an initial discussion about the Shared Vision document and the elements that should be included in it.</i></p> <p>- Introduction: UNECE and GWP-Med - Discussion (All)</p>	<p>- 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Core Group Meeting Report – Annex II: “Context of and the activities within the Drin Dialogue”</p>

### 9. Preparation of a Drin Project supported by GEF (30 min)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<p><i>Pursuant to its related commitment, UNDP, in cooperation with UNECE and GWP-Med, has prepared a Draft GEF Project Identification Form and submitted it to the GEF for financing. The Drin Core Group will be informed about developments as well as steps ahead.</i></p> <p>Introduction: UNECE and GWP-Med Discussion: All</p>	<p>- Project Identification Form submitted</p>

### 10. Drin Dialogue - Next steps and timeframe (30 min)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Background</i>
<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>	<p>- Revised Drin Dialogue Workflow Diagram</p>

### 11. Wrap up - Any Other Business (30 min)

## Annex II. List of Participants

		NAME	SURNAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION / BODY	COUNTRY
<b>Members of the Drin Core Group</b>						
1.	Mr.	Sajmir	HOXHA	Director for Biodiversity	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	ALBANIA
2.	Mr.	Dejan	PANOVSKI	Secretary	Lake Ohrid Committee, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	FYR Macedonia
3.	Ms.	Evelina	STAMOULI	International Relations Officer	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change	GREECE
4.	Mr.	Hazir	ÇARDAKU	Head of Water Policy	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	KOSOVO
5.	Mr.	Arian	MEROLLI	Albanian Representative	Lake Ohrid Committee	ALBANIA
6.	Mr.	Ilir	KRAJA	Secretary	Shkoder Lake Commission	
7.	Mr.	Bo	LIBERT	Regional Adviser on Environment	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	
8.	Mr.	Michael	SCOULLOS	Chairman	Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean	
9.	Mr.	Milan	VOGRIN	Board member	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development	
<b>Secretariat of the Drin Core Group</b>						
10.	Mr.	Dimitris	FALOUTSOS	Programme coordinator for Southeastern Europe	Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean	
11.	Ms.	Anna Maria	PAPAIIOANNOU	Project Assistant	Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean	



### Other Participants

Other Participants						
12.	Mr.	Idlir	GUMBARDHI	Chief of Water Resources Sector	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration	ALBANIA
13.	Mr.	Skender	HASA	Water Resources Specialist	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration	ALBANIA
14.	Ms.	Margarita	LUTAJ	Expert of Water Sector	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration	ALBANIA
15.	Ms.	Fatlije	BUZA	Officer of water protection of River Basin Whit Drin	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	KOSOVO
16.	Ms.	Myvedete	MUJA	Head of license unit	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	KOSOVO
17.	Mr.	Manduha	GOJANI	Coordinator of River Basin Drini Basin	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	KOSOVO
18.	Ms.	Britta	OLOFFSON	Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation	Embassy of Sweden, Swedish International Development Cooperation	SWEDEN
19.	Ms.	Ulrike	STENSDOTTER	Senior scientific advisor	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	SWEDEN
20.	Mr.	Marco	KEINER	Director, Environment, Housing And Land Management Division	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	
21.	Mr.	Walter	KLEMM	Consultant	World Bank	
22.	Ms.	Thomais	VLACHOGIANNI	Programme Officer	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development	