

*Drin Dialogue*  
*Consultation process for the establishment of a*  
*Shared Vision for the management of the extended Drin Basin*

**Information Note**

*Financially supported by the*  
**Swedish Environmental Protection Agency**

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

*Implemented jointly by:*  
**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**  
**Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean**

### *The Drin Basin*

The Drin Basin encounters diverse and often conflicting and unsustainable management approaches, leading to degradation of ecosystems and pollution of the Adriatic Sea, a bottleneck for sustainable economic growth of the region.

Cooperation among riparian countries has been established for the Lakes (Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder) – legally binding agreements have been signed in all three cases - but not at the Basin level where a coordinated and multi-sector collaboration among the countries is needed to ensure a sustainable management.

### *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; 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 **1 December 2009, in Podgorica, Montenegro** (Podgorica 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, the FYR Macedonia and Montenegro as well as the joint Commissions/Committees in place in the sub-basins. It was decided that the UNECE and the GWP-Med will provide assistance, facilitating the implementation of the Drin Dialogue.

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, 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:

- (i) Competent Ministries of the riparians: 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 Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro; Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo
- (ii) 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
- (iii) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- (iv) 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)
- (v) 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 (see above);
- 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.