



PRESPA PARK

REPORT

**TENTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PRESPA PARK COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

**PRETOR, FYR OF MACEDONIA
17 JUNE 2007**

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Tenth Regular Meeting of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC)

Pretor, FYR of Macedonia, 17 June 2007

**Hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the FYR of Macedonia
and the Municipality of Resen –
Funded by the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park Project**

At the invitation of Ms. Darinka Jantinska, Head of the Division for Bilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) of the FYR of Macedonia, and representative of the Ministry to the Prespa Park Coordination Committee, the PPCC held its tenth regular meeting at Hotel Martin, in Pretor, FYR of Macedonia on 17 June 2007.

The meeting was attended by eight out of the ten members of the PPCC, from the three countries involved and from Ramsar/ MedWet, as well as by representatives of UNDP, KfW, GEF/SGP, WWF International, and other national officials and observers (see complete list of participants in Annex II). A representative of the Albanian NGO PPNEA and Mr. Lazaros Nal-pantidis (Mayor of Prespa, Greece) were not able to attend.

The meeting was opened and chaired by Ms. Darinka Jantinska.

Agenda

1. Opening session:

- 1.1. Welcoming by the Chairwoman, Ms. Darinka Jantinska
- 1.2. Welcome address by the State Secretary, Mr. Dejan Panovski
- 1.3. Welcome address by the Mayor of Resen, Mr. Dimitar Buzlevski
- 1.4. Presentation of the working agenda by the Chairwoman and approval

2. Prespa Park GEF project:

- 2.1. Overview of outcomes of the inception workshop and current status (presentation by UNDP Skopje)

3. Activities since the last regular PPCC meeting in Korcha and projects implemented in the Prespa Park area:

- 3.1. Presentation of the project on the "Restoration of Golema Reka" (donor: SDC; implementing body: UNDP Skopje)
- 3.2. Presentation of KfW current and future projects in the Prespa Park area
- 3.3. Presentation of GEF/SGP current and future projects in Albania and FYR of Macedonia Prespa
- 3.4. Additional contributions by PPCC members and other donors/ implementation agencies active in the Prespa Park area
 - 3.4.1. Information from Ohrid Lake Bilateral Committee meeting (19 April 2007)
- 3.5. Questions and Discussion
- 3.6. TRABOREMA – Presentations on results and future plans for transboundary monitoring

- 3.7. Presentation on Transboundary Monitoring Proposal by SPP (With reference to Output 3.1)
- 3.8. Questions and discussion
- 4. Side meeting for the establishment of the Monitoring and Conservation Working Group (MCWG):**
 - 4.1. Presentation by the ITA
 - 4.2. Questions and discussion
- 5. Any other business**
 - 5.1 Exchange of information of the recent algal bloom phenomenon observed in Lake Macro Prespa on 6-7/6/07
- 6. Closure of the meeting:**
 - 6.1 Adoption of decisions, recommendations and conclusions of the meeting
 - 6.2 Date and place of the next meeting
 - 6.3 Closing remarks

Summary Minutes

The Chairwoman, Ms. Darinka Jantinska (MoEPP, FYR of Macedonia - PPCC member) opened the meeting of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee, welcomed all participants and especially the new persons in the meeting, and gave the floor to the State Secretary of the MoEPP, Mr. Dejan Panovski. In his welcome address, Mr. Panovski said that regional cooperation for the environment is supported by the European Commission and seen as a very important issue for European integration. He noted that the transboundary component of the Prespa Park GEF/UNDP project would give new spirit and motivation to the Prespa Park and that it enjoyed the full support of the Ministry. Mr. Panovski also stressed the need for cooperation with the Lake Ohrid Commission.

The Chairwoman then passed the floor to the Mayor of Resen, Mr. Dimitar Buzlevski (PPCC member) who reminded that the PPCC has been functioning as a body for cooperation for many years, and now that the "childhood diseases" were over new opportunities would be open. He stressed the need for increased cooperation between the Municipalities in the Prespa Park, which could play a more proactive role. Moreover, he proposed that in future PPCC meetings representatives of the East West Institute (EWI), who are active for the establishment of a "Euroregion" that would include the Prespa area, should be invited so that synergies and coordination of action could be investigated. The Mayor concluded by saying that the Municipality of Resen was trying to organise a meeting of the Mayors around Prespa and Ministry representatives. Ms. Jantinska thanked the Mayor and noted that the EWI representatives had been invited to the meeting but were unable to come.

The Chairwoman then read the working agenda and at that point Ms. Myrsini Malakou (Society for the Protection of Prespa/ SPP – PPCC member) proposed to add an item on the algal bloom phenomenon and the dead fish observed in Lake Macro Prespa a few days earlier. Professor Svetislav Krstic (Traborema project) took the floor and said that during the presentation of the Traborema project, issues such as algal blooms and the trophic status of the lakes, would be discussed. At that point, Mr. Buzlevski intervened and said that the PPCC should not discuss the issue of algal bloom in Lake Macro Prespa, as its members did not have enough information or the technical competence to make an analysis; on the contrary, the Municipality of Resen had information and data from the Hydrobiological Institute of

Ohrid. Mr. Buzlevski asked what would be the purpose of such a discussion. Mr. Zamir Dedej (Director of Nature Protection Policy, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration/ MoEFWA, Albania - PPCC member) took the floor saying that he would welcome the exchange of information on the algal bloom phenomenon, adding that the Committee's intention was not to enter into technical details, but to strengthen the collaboration between the three countries and experts, and possibly establish an expert working group. The Chairwoman agreed with Mr. Dedej and the discussion on the algal bloom was included in the meeting agenda. Mr. Buzlevski took the floor and argued again that the PPCC did not have the competence and that specialist issues such as this should be discussed through the Ministries and other State institutions. He repeated that the Municipality of Resen had data at its disposal and concluded that if information were available it could be exchanged.

Concerning the draft agenda item on "*PPCC as Steering Committee of the GEF Project, proposed arrangements*", Ms. Anita Kodzoman (UNDP-Skopje) remarked that, following the decisions taken during the GEF inception workshop held the previous day, the TOR for the PPCC would be developed by UNDP and circulated for comments; hence this agenda item should be dropped. Mr. Thymio Papayannis (Ramsar/Medwet - alternate PPCC member) noted that the paper on the arrangements for the PPCC concerned mainly the internal operation of the Committee and as such it could be discussed. The Chairwoman said that after the TOR are prepared by the UNDP, they would be circulated to the PPCC members so that internal arrangements could also be adopted.

Agenda item 4 "Establishment of the Monitoring and Conservation Working Group (MCWG)" was lastly decided to be discussed in a side meeting after the end of the plenary session.

On **agenda item 2** "*Prespa Park GEF project*", the Chairwoman gave the floor to Ms. Kodzoman, who presented the main points discussed and the main conclusions reached at the GEF Project Inception Workshop (16 June 2007). Ms. Kodzoman said that the inception meeting focussed on project progress and project-related activities in the three countries, the respective work plans for the year 2007, the role of stakeholders, (including UNDP Country Offices and the PPCC), and discussed the project Logical Framework and the updated status of co-financing. The main conclusions were: i) the PPCC together with UNDP would act as Project Board, and the rules of procedure of the PPCC as steering committee would be adjusted based on UNDP standard TOR for Project Boards; ii) concerning the Logical Framework, the project teams would communicate with experts and propose relevant indicators and revisions; iii) comments on the annual work plan for 2007 would be incorporated, and then sent to the Project Board and to the UNDP Regional Coordinating Unit in Bratislava for approval. Mr. Papayannis asked what the timing for planning was, in case it could coincide with the coming PPCC meeting. To that Ms. Kodzoman said that the project teams would consolidate their planning by December and then circulate it to the Project Board for approval. Mr. Alvin Lopez (International Transboundary Adviser (ITA) - GEF/UNDP Prespa Park Project) noted that issues pertaining to the Logical Framework would be further discussed at a side-meeting to be held at the end of the day.

On the next **agenda item 3** "*Activities since the last regular PPCC meeting in Korcha and projects implemented in the Prespa Park area*", Ms. Jantinska passed the floor to the PPCC Secretariat. Ms. Vivi Roumeliotou (Society for the Protection of Prespa/ SPP - Secretariat member) said that the report on the activities in the Prespa Park area (working document 1) was indicative and not a full account. Concerning internal planning and activities of the PPCC, the main developments pertained to the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project and its transboundary component. On the adoption of a trilateral agreement on the Prespa Park, there were no new developments during the reporting period. There was some follow-up on the two side meetings on spatial planning and water management, which took place during the previous PPCC Meeting in Korcha (November 2006). Concerning spatial planning, some

technical information was exchanged between the spatial planning teams, and there were plans to organise an event in order to further coordinate their work. Concerning water management, the three sides had designated contact persons responsible for coordinating issues, which could be seen as a basis of a Working Group on Water Management in the framework of the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project. Another related development was the letter by WWF-Greece and SPP to the European Commission Water Unit, calling for more active involvement of the Commission in water management and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) principles in the Prespa basin.

Changes in the PPCC membership, Ms. Roumeliotou continued, involved the resignation of Prof. Aleko Miho (Protection and Preservation of the Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) - PPCC member) from the PPCC, and the election of Mr. Edmond Themelko as Mayor of the Liqenas Commune in Albania during the last Municipal Elections, replacing Mr. Pandi Andoni.

Regarding activities by major donors in the three countries, and smaller GEF/SGP (Small Grant Programme) in Albania and the FYR of Macedonia, Ms. Roumeliotou noted that the donors or the implementing agencies themselves would present those later during the meeting.

Referring to activities at each of the three sides, Ms. Roumeliotou said that in Albania an interesting project on the Balkan Lynx and its recovery had started. On the Greek side, the Municipality of Prespa continued with the implementation of its programmes and projects, mainly related to infrastructure works. An interesting development was the project for wastewater treatment covering the majority of the population living in the Municipality of Prespa. The Prespa National Forest Management Body would begin the implementation of its activities, following funding allocated by the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works of Greece (MoEPPPW). Moreover, the SPP continued the implementation of its national and transboundary projects. The SPP project on the endemic Prespa trout, was being carried out with partners from the FYR of Macedonia. The presence of the Prespa trout in more streams than previously thought was confirmed, Ms. Roumeliotou said, and a Species Action Plan would be soon circulated. Another SPP project concerned the establishment of an information centre in Zogradec, Albania, and capacity building of the local women NGO. Furthermore, SPP projects with national activities included a pilot field project for the certification of beans as "Prespa Park product", and the preparation of a guiding document for the management of the littoral zone of Micro Prespa Lake, and especially wet meadows, as a concluding activity of the relevant LIFE project. In the Municipality of Resen, social and environmental projects and initiatives included the opening of the Municipal Centre for Sustainable Development, activities targeting the unemployed and awareness raising. Apart from the above, the work of the Secretariat and the PPCC for following up information and developments was continued, Ms. Roumeliotou concluded.

Mr. Papayannis commented that, although the PPCC tends to concentrate on the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project, small projects and activities were very important in keeping the momentum of the Prespa Park.

Mr. Petar Gjorgjiev (German Bank for Reconstruction – KfW Skopje) took the floor and asked the PPCC whether there was any information concerning a NATO-financed study and activities in the region. The Chairwoman replied that the PPCC did not have any information, apart from a project proposal a few years ago. She then asked Mr. Nikola Zdraveski (GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project) who had participated in one of the meetings of the NATO project, to brief the PPCC members. Mr. Zdraveski said that the project had partners from all three countries sharing the Prespa lakes; from the FYR of Macedonia in particular, the Faculty of Technology from the University of Cyril and Methodius in Skopje was the main partner and the Municipality of Resen was the main beneficiary. The project objective is the preparation of a hydrological study including water inflows and outflows of the lakes and a

water balance model. Mr. Zdraveski explained that the project partners had defined the methodology, and concrete activities would start next year. Ms. Jantinska said that the PPCC should nevertheless ask the representatives of the project to provide some more information, and noted that overlapping with other Prespa Park projects or activities should be avoided.

Commenting on the report on activities in the Prespa Park area since the previous PPCC meeting in Korcha, the Chairwoman mentioned that she was looking forward to a follow-up of the side-meetings on spatial planning and water issues, this time with the presence of the ITA. She informed the PPCC that the spatial plan for the Ohrid-Prespa region was in the drafting phase, public hearings would start in the coming weeks and it was expected to have the plan ready for adoption by Parliament by the end of summer 2007. Ms. Jantinska also congratulated SPP and WWF-Greece for their communication with the European Commission on the issue of water management in Prespa.

Mr. Dedej informed the PPCC that there had been collaboration on water issues between the Albanian Ministry of Environment with their counterparts in the FYR of Macedonia, and that Ms. Jantinska together with the Head of the Water Sector of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Bojan Durnev, had paid a visit to Albanian Prespa. Ms. Jantinska said that Mr. Durnev would most probably be the contact person on water issues nominated by the FYR of Macedonia. Mr. Dedej added that the idea of bilateral committees on water issues had been discussed and that an agreement between the Albanian and the Greek side was expected in this connection. Ms. Jantinska said that although bilateral committees should be established, cooperation on Prespa would need a follow-up of the trilateral meetings on water and development of concrete activities in the future. Ms. Panagiota Maragou (WWF-International) took the floor and said that bilateral agreements might be an important tool on a bilateral basis, but going back to the Water Framework Directive there is an obligation on behalf of Greece to work on the whole catchment basin. Ms. Maragou thought that the Prespa Park should focus more on the issue of the WFD. Ms. Jantinska agreed in principle and said that the WFD should be applied in the region and that the Prespa Park should start working on the issue with the operation of the working group on water management.

She then gave the floor to Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski (UNDP-Skopje) for the presentation of the project for the "Restoration of the Golema Reka", which was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by UNDP-Skopje. Mr. Sekovski said that this was the first project in the FYR of Macedonia taking an integrated approach for river restoration and a methodology giving priority to ecosystem values. Moreover, it was complementary to other activities in the Municipality of Resen, such as the projects on solid waste management and on the reduction of impacts of agriculture. The first stages of the project focussed on the identification of impacts and the formulation of a restoration plan as a basis for the implementation of measures and works. Proposed project activities were divided into 7 different tasks, including: the restoration of the riverbed and the riparian corridor; mitigation of impacts of solid waste and wastewater; wetland improvement; forest cover improvement; tackling problems of land-use; river monitoring; and public awareness. Mr. Sekovski explained that funding was limited, and a prioritisation of tasks and measures was needed, following communication with key stakeholders. Some small-scale activities had already been implemented for the reforestation of appr. 20ha of eroded land upstream, and the cleaning of existent draining channels to prevent flooding of 500ha of agricultural land. Concerning restoration of the riverbed, regulation works would concentrate on two sections, the first on the urban part of Resen, and the second on a river section stretching for 3km near the village of Ezerani for flood-protection purposes. Mr. Sekovski said that those two sections were of high priority for the Municipality and the inhabitants. Another measure would be the collection of rain and wastewater to be transported to the wastewater treatment facilities in Ezerani. Mr. Sekovski said that those tasks would be finalised with the

funds available, and the remaining tasks and activities were eligible for funding by GEF and possibly other interested donors. Mr. Sekovski showed slides from the proposed interventions. The full presentation is available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

The Chairwoman opened the floor to comments. Mr. Lopez inquired what ecological processes had been considered in the design of the restoration and how they would be monitored. To that, Mr. Sekovski said that the criteria for the development of the proposals had been 'ecosystem-oriented', but unfortunately many limitations, particularly in the urban section, had been imposed by the urban plan and the current situation. However, he underlined the measures proposed for the collection of wastewater and its transportation to the treatment facility, and for tackling the solid waste problem, and said that in that way many aquatic organisms would benefit.

Ms. Malakou commented that this was the first restoration of a river in Prespa and asked for more information on the project and its activities. To that, Ms. Kodzoman said that perhaps the Terms of Reference could be shared with stakeholders, and added that the proposals were developed by the consultants and experts from the faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Skopje. She said that a lot of attention was put in the ecosystem approach, but it was not visible because the main proposal dealt with the urban section.

Mr. Krstic intervened in his capacity as an expert in the development of a national strategy for sustainable development in the FYR of Macedonia. He said that eco-remediation techniques would be preferable to river canalisation proposed by the project. He noted that with application of canalisation, protection of the environment and flood prevention would not be possible. He strongly suggested that the project should reconsider such activities. Ms. Kodzoman said that all that had been taken into consideration, but the real situation had to be taken into account too. She reminded that the Resen section of the river went through a heavily populated area with existing structures on the river banks. Destroying kilometres of concrete would be very expensive and could not be done in the scope of this project. Mr. Krstic noted that a corresponding category labelled 'heavily modified water bodies' existed under the WFD. Mr. Sekovski reminded the limitations by the urban plan and said that that particular section of the river passing through the town of Resen had already been regulated. Concerning the river stretch through Ezerani, he said that the natural flow would be kept and that flood protection would be provided with the construction of earth embankments, with use of local materials and autochthonous vegetation.

Ms. Maragou made a general comment, saying that even in heavily modified waters and densely populated areas, in the long run it is often economically more feasible to invest a larger amount of money to save the town from future problems caused by floods. In the course of 15 or 20 years, the investment might be cheaper; however the Municipality or the State should have to consider this and not the donor.

Ms. Roumeliotou expressed the same concerns and asked which tasks of the project would be finally carried out. She also asked whether the design of the proposed solutions took into consideration the fact that Ezerani is a Ramsar wetland site and a strictly protected area, and if there was an overall plan for the whole of Golema Reka that could be shared with other stakeholders. Mr. Sekovski said that the Ezerani reserve had been taken into consideration, but nevertheless the river section in question was outside the protected area. He noted that the place was prone to flooding and that apple orchards were located on river banks. He said that the project would be accepted by the local people and community following consultations. Concerning the rest of the project tasks, he said that detailed technical design for the execution of works in the future had been produced. He added that the project had gone through a process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), although there

was no such obligation, it had official approval by the Ministry and fulfilled the requirements of the national legislation for the environment.

Mr. Arian Gace (GEF-SGP Albania), took the floor and said that the project basically involved clean-up and embellishment of river sections, and not classical river restoration. Mr. Krstic said that if such measures were implemented it would be very difficult to reverse them, and asked the project again to focus on eco-remediation. Mr. Lopez said that, given that water in Prespa is a transboundary resource, it would be possible to organise a forum on the restoration of the Golema Reka, in order to share technical details and concerns, add more value to the project, and invite partners from the other littoral states. Ms. Kodzoman responded that during implementation, all national legislation and UNDP rules had been taken into account and there was consulting and supervision by experts. She said that if the details of the project on Golema Reka were shared, then this should apply to all other significant projects in the region, and the PPCC would have to consider this. Ms. Kodzoman added that the project was already in the pre-qualification stage and funding was secured for the end of the current month. Ms. Jantinska also added that the project was already finalised and the relevant representatives from the Ministry, UNDP and expert level, had been involved in project planning. She thanked UNDP for sharing all those details and said that the recommendations by the participants would be taken into account in the future.

Mr. Andon Bojadzi (Director of the Galichica National Park) noted that although one of the main goals of the Prespa Park was to protect biodiversity reforestation in the eroded areas had been done with *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False Acacia). He recommended the use of autochthonous species in the future. Ms. Jantinska commented that autochthonous species should be always used in the Prespa Park region, not just in the case of Golema Reka.

Mr. Papayannis remarked that the preceding discussion would have been more useful had it been done one year before; the flow of information is very useful only when done on time and not when things are finalised. Mr. Lopez, in his capacity as the ITA of the GEF/UNDP project, said that in the future, as is the case with other shared river basins, there is a need to develop procedures or guidelines to jointly consider project of a certain magnitude. He added that such a procedure would not necessarily facilitate sharing of information, although decision-making lies with individual state authorities. In this connection, Ms. Jantinska noted that a first presentation of the project on Golema Reka had been done during the previous 9th PPCC meeting in Korcha in November 2006.

After the coffee break, the Chairwoman proposed to proceed with presentation of the KfW current and future projects in the Prespa Park area. Accordingly, Ms. Kleitia Monari (KfW Tirana) started presenting the activities of KfW in the region. Ms. Monari said that a financing and a separate agreement had been signed in December 2006 and added that, after a visit of a tender agent in the project site in Albania, KfW decided to wait for certain preconditions put to the Ministry of Environment to be fulfilled before the qualification of the consultants started; hence, no deadlines for the project could be set before that. Regarding KfW involvement in the region, Ms. Monari mentioned the very successful investments of KfW in water supply and sewage in Korcha and Pogradec. Within this frame, she noted that the water supply services of the FYR of Macedonia had visited the water supply enterprises of Korcha and Pogradec, for the exchange of information and demonstration of the work done. Similar visits were planned to take place in the FYR of Macedonia. Ms. Monari then referred to the new KfW project on solid waste management, which would involve the construction of a new landfill for the region (including Korcha, Pogradec and other Municipalities and Communes), noting that KfW was at that point under legal procedures for setting up an association with the representatives of the Municipalities and Communes that would be responsible for project implementation. She added that the project would be implemented in cooperation with the MoEFWA of Albania and is parallel to the Swedish International Devel-

opment and Cooperation Agency (SIDA) involvement in the area for the rehabilitation of the active landfill. Ms. Monari remarked that KfW is also involved in the Prespa region through the Albanian Development Fund (ADF), which is responsible for small-scale infrastructure projects (roads and water supply), while the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) investments in Prespa, which involved improvement of houses for the increase of tourism capacity in the area, also form part of bilateral cooperation in the region. She concluded by noting that KfW projects in the region had been very successful and KfW was looking forward to implementing new projects with the collaboration of local authorities and inhabitants.

Ms. Jantinska thanked the KfW representative and opened the floor for questions and comments. Mr. Dedej recognized the fact that there were delays on behalf of the Ministry of Environment of Albania for signing the technical documents of the project, explaining that this was due to the low capacity of the protected areas' administration. To this point he stated the intention of the Ministry to fulfil all KfW requests (increase number of personnel etc.) as well as the former's willingness to cooperate for the implementation of the project.

Ms. Jantinska then gave the floor to Mr. Petar Gjorgjiev (KfW Skopje). Mr. Gjorgjiev started by saying that the total financing volume of KfW for the Prespa region in the FYR of Macedonia was around €5 million, out of which €1.5 million would be spent for the Prespa Park process. He added that there were ongoing activities on that. He also mentioned that a project for the support of the rehabilitation and extension of wastewater system in the Resen area, entitled "Environmental protection of Lake Prespa" had been concluded. Referring to the previous presentation on SDC-financed projects, he said he fully supported the idea of making maximum use of the existing wastewater treatment plant in Ezerani and asked the other donors and the Ministry of Environment to take into consideration the capacity of the existing infrastructure and avoid making new constructions for wastewater treatment, where this is possible. Concerning ongoing projects Mr. Gjorgjiev stated that financial agreements for the Prespa Park project had been signed a few months ago, with the National Park Galichica being the beneficiary. Mr. Gjorgjiev said that all necessary requirements in order to start utilizing the funds had been fulfilled. The first step was the engagement of a tender agent who along with National Park Galichica worked on the TOR for the selection of the consultant for the implementation of the KfW part of the project. Mr. Gjorgjiev said that the pre-qualification was launched on 9 June and bids were expected by 9 July, stressing that the Prespa region remained of great importance to the German Development cooperation. Finally he recommended once more the best use of existing information and resources available when planning and implementing projects in the area, so that overlapping of activities could be avoided. Then he asked the Director of the Galichica National Park, Mr. Andon Bojadzi, to speak about the operational part of the current project.

The Chairwoman remarked that the PPCC had already recommended that all Prespa Park stakeholders should contribute with their material (studies, reports) to the process, and to this effect she also asked KfW to share any relevant feasibility studies with the other stakeholders. Then Ms. Jantinska gave the floor to the Director of the Galichica NP. Mr. Bojadzi started by saying that the KfW project is mainly concerned with conservation management and strengthening of the NP authorities. He said that the prequalification had been published in Germany and the FYR of Macedonia a few days earlier and the deadline for submission was 9 July. A short listing of five firms would follow along with an invitation for final bids from their side. Mr. Bojadzi said that the final bids were expected to be evaluated in September 2007 and the contract with the chosen firm to be signed in the beginning of October. Finally, he mentioned that an annual work plan for the public institution of Galichica National Park was being prepared, with emphasis on the activities that are going to be financed by KfW.

The Chairwoman thanked the speakers and opened the floor for discussion. Ms. Roumeliotou inquired whether the wastewater treatment plant in Ezerani was fully operational and covered the city of Resen. She also inquired about the status of the Italian Development Assistance programme. Mr. Gjorgjiev replied that the wastewater treatment and rehabilitation project was finished and that the plant was fully operational. He added that from that point on its efficient operation would depend on the beneficiary using it, i.e. the Municipality of Resen; if used wisely it could work for the next 20-30 years. He further invited other donors dealing with wastewater treatment of the neighbouring villages to connect households and production facilities to the existing collection system. Regarding the Italian Development Assistance programme, Mr. Bojadzi said that the implementation of the project had ceased due to some internal problems of the main project partner (CRIC), and according to the latest information the project would resume in mid July. He also added that a mission of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-financing the project by 50%, had visited the FYR of Macedonia in order to assess project implementation and that they has stated their intention to continue with the second year of project implementation. At that point Ms. Monari noted that KfW involvement in water and sewage systems in Korcha and Pogradec also involved the construction of wastewater treatment plants in both cities, which were not operational yet but were expected to be in the near future.

Ms. Jantinska then invited the GEF-SGP (Small Grants Programme) representatives to present their projects in the Prespa area. Mr. Zlatko Samardziev (GEF-SGP National Coordinator for the FYR of Macedonia) made a presentation on the progress of the GEF-SGP projects in the region since the last 9th PPCC meeting in Korcha. The presentation addressed the three projects co-financed by GEF-SGP in the region, namely:

- i) Integral protection of the apple production in the Prespa region [total budget \$28,777; partners: UNDP-Project Office Resen; UNDP RBEC, Local Self-Government Resen; Implementing Agency: SZ United Agroproducers; project closed]
- ii) Pilot centre for endangered fish stock including monitoring station (Prespa Lake-Oteshevo [total budget: \$22,031; Partners: Sport Fishing NGO "Pelikan" of Resen, Concessionaire of Prespa Lake Ribo Mak of Resen, Fish pond in Resen, State Agriculture Inspectorate; project ongoing]
- iii) Modern methods for management of organic waste in Prespa (planning grant for preparation of full proposal of a pilot project for composting organic waste in the Golema Reka region) [Total budget: \$2,218; project closed]

Overall, all GEF SGP FYR of Macedonia projects in Prespa for the period 2005-2007 have been under the focal area of "Protection of International Waters". The total amount of the projects was \$53,026, where GEF SGP contributed with \$26,855 and the rest was co-financed by the project partners. Future activities would include the commencement of the selected projects in September 2007 and a new call of proposals by the end of July 2007. The full presentation is available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

The Chairwoman thanked Mr. Samardziev and opened the floor for discussion. Concerning the fish breeding project, Ms. Roumeliotou noted that fisheries are a common resource and asked for more details on the fish-breeding station for carp. Mr. Samardziev said that several species of fish, and not just carp, were bred in the station. Ms. Roumeliotou wished to know where the breeding material came from and Mr. Samardziev replied that the small fish from the lake enter the station on their own. Mr. Krstic noted that this was called the Meander System, and was developed in the Dojran Lake. It involved the construction of an enclosure with use of sticks, branches and local material, thus producing a protected area for fish to breed. The fish enter the enclosure and produce their offspring, which is then caught and

released back into the lake. This way any kind of fish of the lake may enter the breeding area. In the discussion that followed, it emerged that the method is very effective, but it may be compromised by illegal fishing within the enclosures, and therefore the breeding station need careful monitoring to avoid such incidents.

Mr. Dedej mentioned that the governments of the three littoral states had already signed an agreement for the fishing period in the Prespa Lakes and he suggested that the respective stakeholders (Unions of Fishermen) meet and make a more specific agreement and regulation concerning fishing, adding that the PPCC could facilitate that meeting. Ms. Malakou commented that the project was very interesting from a cultural perspective, traditional fishing methods continue to be used in the Prespa Lakes. She also noted that many species in the Prespa area are endemic and although there is a tendency to talk about a decrease of fish population in the region the accuracy of this statement and the specific reasons of stock reduction should be further investigated. Ms. Jantinska expressed her agreement with Ms. Malakou and Mr. Dedej. Mr. Samardziev finally added that breeding stations of the same type had been operational on the Albanian side and invited any of the participants interested to visit with him the site near Oteshevo after the end of the meeting.

The Chairwoman then gave the floor to Mr. Arian Gace (GEF/SGP National Coordinator for Albania). In brief, Mr. Gace referred to the following projects:

- i) In situ preservation of autochthonous "Prespa Cow" in the Prespa National Park [grant: \$37,670\$; partner: NGO ALBAGENE; ongoing project]
- ii) Protection of biodiversity at Treni cave, Prespa National Park [grant: \$27,110; partner: Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals; ongoing project]
- iii) Heritage trails, the promotion of biodiversity and encouragement of agro- tourism in Prespa [grant: \$9,000; partner: Association Prespa e Vogel; ongoing project]
- iv) Building of water reservoirs in the alpine meadows of Prespa National Park as an incentive for the utilization of alpine pasture [grant: \$10,300; CBO: Bobolec; newly approved, ongoing project]

Mr. Gace presented the GEF-SGP projects in the pipeline, including projects for: the restoration of 10ha of degraded forest in the vicinity of Djellas village; the reconstruction of carp nursery ponds; and the restoration of infrastructure needed for utilizing the alpine meadows: access roads, water reservoirs and shelters. The full presentation available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

Ms. Jantinska thanked the speaker and opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Dedej mentioned that he was a member of the GEF-SGP Bureau in Albania and he knew and fully supported the concept of the said projects. He also added that GEF-SGP could play a very good role in the region as it has very simple procedures of operation - direct money transfer and close control of project results. To this point he suggested that, as GEF-SGP money go directly to community based organizations, it would be wise if the donors invested in increasing the capacity of local people, so that the latter are more prepared to develop project proposals and apply for funding. Mr. Dedej also proposed that GEF-SGP activities implemented by the NGOs be linked to the appropriate regional/ state country services; that way, the relevant stakeholders would be informed and might also contribute to the successful implementation of the projects. Ms. Jantinska said that one cannot expect from small NGOs to have the capacity of writing project proposals and a way should be found to help them on that. Replying to the above comments, Mr. Gace stressed that this whole issue was very complex as development assistance money usually comes from developed countries that have a very organised system and it would be difficult and time-consuming to close this gap. That actually posed a dilemma as to whether it would be better to wait until local capacity is

built, or make some progress in specific areas with the implementation of projects. Mr. Gace acknowledged that bureaucracy could be a problem with big donor organizations, and suggested that the solution should be somewhere in between. Mr. Dedej repeated that, in a market economy environment, it would be better for NGOs to have the capacity to work autonomously and directly. He added that the best ideas often came from local people and that the donors should help them raise their capacity.

Following that, Ms. Jantinska briefed the PPCC members on her participation at the 3rd Bilateral Meeting for Lake Ohrid Watershed Management in April 2007. She provided background information and highlighted the main differences between the Bilateral Committee on Lake Ohrid and the PPCC process. She noted that the joint agreement for the protection and sustainable development of Lake Ohrid Watershed, signed between Albania and FYR of Macedonia in 2004, provided a good basis for cooperation, while the higher-level representation in the Committee contributed to the faster resolution of any issue/problem that might arise. The Secretariat of the Lake Ohrid Committee consisted of one representative from each country. Ms. Jantinska said that it had been the first time a representative of the PPCC was invited at a Lake Ohrid Committee meeting, where she had presented the developments in the Prespa Park process and the ongoing GEF project, on behalf of the Committee and the MoEPP. The main conclusions of the 3rd Committee meeting were: 1) the establishment of three expert working groups (working on the legal framework of the Lake Ohrid Watershed, on the Lake Ohrid watershed management plan and on fisheries), and 2) the intention of the Ohrid Committee to regularly attend the PPCC meetings. Ms. Jantinska proposed to invite a representative of the Lake Ohrid Committee at PPCC meetings and opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Papayannis said that from the beginning of the Prespa Park process, PPCC believed that collaboration with the Lake Ohrid Committee should be cultivated. He added that Ms. Jantinska's participation in their meeting and the idea of inviting the Ohrid Committee to participate in PPCC meetings were very positive as there could be a synergy between the two committees. Mr. Dedej stated his full support to the idea of linking Lake Prespa and Lake Ohrid, noting that both lakes lie within the territories of Albania and FYR of Macedonia. He also remarked that treating the two lakes as a whole ecosystem is one of the big challenges for the future. Summing up, the Chairwoman noted that the proposal was accepted by the PPCC members and that the Secretariat of the Lake Ohrid Committee would be invited to participate in coming PPCC meetings. Finally, she invited anyone interested to visit the website of the MoEPP for more information on the Lake Ohrid meeting.

Mr. Samardziev took the floor and proposed that a draft allocation agreement between the two Governments and GEF-SGP could be prepared by the end of year in order to co-fund such activities in the Prespa region, thus contributing to the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project. Ms. Jantinska replied that a discussion about the national contribution of the three countries had been made at the GEF inception meeting on the previous day. She stressed there were specific procedures for money allocation in every country which would likely hinder such an agreement. Ministry budgets were usually projected for the next three years, while all programmes in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning went through public calls, which were already concluded for the year 2007. She finally added that it would be difficult to commit extra money for GEF/UNDP project activities from the national budget. Mr. Dedej said that the idea was very good, however the local contribution to UNDP had already been set (at \$40,000/year), and once money was allocated for an area the discussion was considered closed. He concluded that a general political agreement would be difficult to achieve, however it would be easier to allocate money for co-financing on specific activities and projects in a step-by-step process.

The Chairwoman then passed the floor to the representatives of the trilateral Traborema project. Prof. Svetislav Krstic thanked the organisers for the invitation and started presenting the project entitled "Concepts for integrated transboundary water management and sustainable socio-economic development in the cross border region of Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece". The full presentation is available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

The project was implemented through the period June 2004-May 2007, with the collaboration of university and research institutes of the three countries concerned, Spain and Austria. Funding came from the European Commission Programme: FP6 – INCO – Western Balkan Countries. In his presentation, Mr. Krstic stressed the importance of the implementation of the WFD principles on basin water management and the achievement of "good status" in the Prespa region. The main objectives and results of the Traborema project included: i) assessment of the ecological status of Macro Prespa; ii) design and testing of a cost-effective water monitoring system at the lake; iii) gathering of monthly water quality data from 14 monitoring points in the lake and 8 monitoring points in tributaries; iv) prediction of ecological status and trends; and v) identification of alternative socio-economic options to support regional sustainable development and improve lake's water quality. During project implementation, Google and satellite images were used for the development of specialised maps, database and GIS system. It was found that the phosphorous content in the Prespa waters doubled in the past 70 years and that eutrophication now posed a problem. The main anthropogenic activities identified to have caused increased environmental pollution in the past 50 years were: agriculture, water abstraction, forestry, illegal logging, solid waste and tourism. Following a reference to certain monitoring results, Mr. Krstic concluded his presentation with a proposal for the development of a monitoring system for Lake Prespa. According to Mr. Krstic, the monitoring system should be based on operational monitoring (to be conducted on the FYR of Macedonia side) and investigative and surveillance monitoring (that should be done on all three sides). For more information the speaker urged the participants to visit the project site: www.traborema.net and proposed to have two more presentations on other aspects of the project. Mr. Dedej thanked Mr. Krstic for the presentation and the significant work done. He added that to his opinion the PPCC was adequately informed and that additional presentations, especially on specialised issues such as GIS, would probably not be necessary. Finally, he requested the project results to be distributed to all other institutions working on water monitoring in the three countries. Mr. Krstic said that more information could be provided to anyone interested. The Chairwoman proposed discussion to follow after the next presentations and invited participants to lunch.

The Chairwoman opened the evening session and gave the floor to Prof. Vlastimir Glamocanin for an additional presentation on the Traborema project. Mr. Glamocanin's presentation referred to the database management system developed on the basis of the WFD requirements. The idea from the beginning was that the database be made accessible to different partners from all over Europe, be friendly to non-expert users, and give information on different water parameters (physical, chemical and biological) by location and by time. Additional IT tools developed during the project included a GIS system with various layers and a 3D model of Macro Prespa Lake. The full presentation available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

Prof. Kosta Mitreski from the Traborema consortium continued with a presentation on database modelling, simulation and a prediction dynamic model for Prespa. Mr. Mitreski said that measurements of the trophic state index (one of the main indicators for monitoring pollution levels), classified the Macro Prespa Lake as mesotrophic, which means it should be protected and preserved. A step towards this direction would be to decrease the concentration of the phosphorus component in the Lake. Prof. Mitreski added that the dynamic model cre-

ated showed a rise on the concentration of phosphorus for the coming time period and concluded with the Traborema proposal for reduction of incoming waste from the rivers and construction of a purifying system for the prevention of future eutrophication of the ecosystem. The full presentation available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

Ms. Jantinska thanked the presenters and opened the floor for questions and discussion. Ms. Maragou asked whether the team had any plans for expanding their work in order to cover the whole Prespa basin, as what was presented concerned mainly the Macro Prespa Lake. Secondly, Ms. Maragou asked whether there was any estimation on biological, morphological and geo-morphological indicators of water bodies, which are parameters required according to the WFD and should be part of an integrated water monitoring system. Finally, she asked whether the team had assessed and made use of previous monitoring work done in three countries, so as to better utilise existing knowledge and avoid duplication of activities.

Replying to the above, Mr. Krstic said that the Traborema consortium had done research in the three countries in order to find out the status of existing data for the Prespa waters and had concluded that previous monitoring was done sporadically, partially and was not in line with WFD requirements. Concerning the use of biological parameters in the Traborema project, Mr. Krstic noted that algae and certain other indicators were included; however morphology and geomorphology indicators had not been used, neither fish and microphytes as the WFD states. These, he added, had been out of the project's scope, noting, however, that Traborema should be considered as a starting point towards the implementation of the WFD principles in Prespa. Mr. Krstic also stated that the work should be further expanded and that the team's presence at the meeting intended to promote the use of the work done and to investigate possible ways of expanding it. Finally he noted that a significant number of reports on different subjects would be produced as deliverables of the Traborema project to the EU.

Mr. Dedej started by saying that the work done was impressive and mentioned that a monitoring system had in fact been developed during the Lake Ohrid conservation project. Regarding the reports produced within the framework of the Traborema project, he said it would be good if these were made available to the PPCC and proposed to the UNDP Country Office Albania to organise a seminar for the discussion of scientific data collected during the project. Referring to the suggestion for the establishment of a central monitoring institution for Prespa in the FYR of Macedonia, Mr. Dedej stressed that partners from all three countries should be involved in research and monitoring and relevant capacity should be established in all three sides.

Mr. Krstic responded that Traborema had made the first effort to establish a complete monitoring system for Lake Prespa and that a significant amount of scientific data and reports had been produced. Nevertheless, a monitoring system should be cost-effective, and the development of laboratories at all three sides of the Lake, doing the same work, would not lead to that direction. Moreover, he argued that monitoring of the same parameters should be made at one laboratory, using the same methodology in order to avoid both duplication of work and increased costs. Mr. Dedej stressed that he did not want to open a debate on that, but insisted that standard monitoring should be done in all countries and capacity should also be created at the three sides. Mr. Krstic replied that effective monitoring with reliable data should be done at the same time, with the same methods and system. The Chairwoman said that this issue would be further discussed at a later stage, when the ToR would be elaborated at a trilateral level with the contribution of experts on the issue.

Ms. Malakou raised three questions concerning the Traborema project. Firstly, she asked whether there was a cost estimation for the implementation of the proposal of the

Traborema team; secondly, whether there was a proposal for collaboration with existing bodies/institutes doing qualitative analysis in the three countries; and lastly whether a method for quantitative data had been elaborated. Mr. Krstic replied that considering monitoring everything was negotiable and that the cost would depend on the specific system elaborated, the details of which would be decided by the PPCC.

Mr. Spyros Plessas (MoEPPPW- PPCC member) stated that the PPCC is a political and not a scientific or technical body, and that the discussion had changed course and had passed to the details for the development of the Prespa Park transboundary monitoring system. Nevertheless, the expert group due to be established would discuss details on that. Mr. Plessas added that an integrated transboundary monitoring system should include a series of ecological parameters apart from water quality parameters. He also noted that Greece, as a EU country, is obliged to develop an integrated water monitoring system that would observe all WDF required standards and that the Central Water Agency of the Ministry of Environment in Greece is in the process of studying the setting up of such a water monitoring system in the country. Mr. Plessas concluded that the PPCC should decide on the process of developing a monitoring system and not on the substance, and that all relevant work done up to know should be taken into account. Mr. Lopez also asked what the availability and accessibility of Traborema data was. Mr. Krstic responded that data was available and added that the work of the Traborema project had been the outcome of a consortium consisting of experts from the three sides, and that the purpose of the presence of his colleagues and himself in the meeting was to present the data produced and to promote further elaboration of the work in the future.

The Chairwoman then gave the floor to Ms. Malakou to present a SPP proposal on the framework for the development of a Prespa Park monitoring system, related to GEF project output 3.1. After noting that the development of a transboundary monitoring system for the Prespa Park has been one of the first issues discussed in PPCC meetings and was also included within the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project activities, Ms. Malakou announced that the SPP recently secured funds for contributing to this activity. She then proceeded with the presentation of a proposal on behalf of the SPP for the organisation of the transboundary monitoring project. The full presentation is available at:

groups.yahoo.com/group/prespaproject/files/10th%20PPCC%20meeting%20documents/

She initially noted that all three countries should agree on a common vision and basic issues regarding the monitoring system and that this should be fully integrated with the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project. The steps proposed by SPP were the following:

1. Preparatory stage for building consensus on the monitoring system and developing TOR. This is to be prepared and delivered to the Monitoring and Conservation Working Group (MCWG) of the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project, by an expert team led by the Station Biologique Tour du Valat (TdV) – one of the MedWet technical centres - with national experts from the three countries (June - December 2007), and funding by SPP/ WWF-Greece. Establishment and operation of the MCWG (Jun 07 – end of project) could be funded by the GEF/UNDP project.
2. Expert study with specific deliverables. This is to be prepared and delivered to the MCWG by an expert team led by the TdV with national experts from the three countries (January-December 2008), with funding by SPP/WWF-Greece. Stakeholder consultations could be funded by the GEF/UNDP project.
3. Focussed research on priority species (October 2007 – September 2008), to be funded by the GEF/UNDP project.

4. Purchase and installation of basic equipment necessary for the operation of the trans-boundary monitoring system in Albania and FYR-Macedonia (January-June 2009), to be funded by the GEF/UNDP project.
5. Pilot phase application of transboundary monitoring system, relevant training, data management and networking, (January 2009 – June 2010), to be funded by SPP/WWF-Greece.
6. Evaluation and adjustment of the transboundary monitoring system (January-June 2010), to be funded by SPP/WWF-Greece.
7. Approval of transboundary monitoring system by MCWG and PPCC. Signature of a relevant trilateral protocol of cooperation (July-December 2010); activity to be funded by the GEF/UNDP project

The Chairwoman then passed the floor to Ms. Kodzoman, who said that from the perspective of the UNDP Country Offices the main idea was how to merge funds, coming from the GEF and the SPP and best utilise them. She noted that, for GEF, equipment and heavy research were not always eligible for funding, and she proposed to use GEF funds for funding the monitoring study. Consequently, there should be an open tender for the consultancy, since according to GEF/UNDP rules there could be no direct contracting to TdV or any other institution. To her opinion, the work during the monitoring project should not be done by international partners only, but it should also increase the capacity of national institutions and stakeholders. Concerning the MCWG, Ms. Kodzoman pointed out that it would not have decision-making authority. Since the WFD would take long to be implemented in Albania and the FYR of Macedonia, Ms. Kodzoman said that the monitoring project should come up with a proposal for a short-term effective system, having in mind the specifics of each country; following this it should come up with another proposal for the long term, organised in stages based on the funds available. The preparatory phase should produce guidelines and protocols for joint monitoring adopted by the three countries; otherwise the system would be difficult to function.

Ms. Malakou stated her understanding of GEF/UNDP difficulties in funding the procurement of equipment, but on the other hand, the fact was that SPP had secured funds for the study itself. She said that the SPP believed that a body like TdV, with a long experience working in the area since the 80s, would be appropriate for the study. She added that the MCWG would advise and introduce issues to the PPCC, and approval of the monitoring project would go through the competent authorities. But still, the MCWG would do the hard work, involving the preparation of working documents and facilitation.

Mr. Dedej took the floor expressing his agreement with the SPP proposal and the steps suggested and stressing the necessity for such a study in order to identify the needs of each country and develop the necessary protocols. He noted that in fact there were two funding sources available, one from SPP/WWF-Greece and one from GEF/UNDP, and he proposed that the ITA could clarify issues concerning the calls and the activities under the GEF/UNDP budget. He pointed out that funds coming from the regional component of the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project would be perhaps more difficult to utilise since that component is directly executed by UNDP. Nevertheless, concerning the national components of the GEF/UNDP project, which are nationally executed, he expressed the Ministry's interest in funding procurement of equipment from the national budget. Concerning the choice of consultant, he said that TdV is an authority on Mediterranean wetlands and thought that a solution could be found with UNDP on its selection. If that were not possible, Mr. Dedej said that the consultancy by TdV could be considered as part of the SPP/WWF-Greece proposal.

Ms. Kodzoman clarified that the UNDP could do direct contracting under certain conditions, such as in the case of monopolies, otherwise it followed a competitive process. On that is-

sue, Ms. Maragou intervened and said that, although she understood the difficulties faced by UNDP on directly appointing specific institutions, it was nevertheless clear that the related activities would be funded by SPP/WWF-Greece, and that UNDP was not asked to appoint TdV. She added that the UNDP and GEF rules would of course apply to the activities proposed to be funded by them.

Mr. Papayannis said that the issue was perhaps too technical and little studied by the PPCC. He noted that the monitoring proposal involved a step by step approach which was important because the three countries would be able to develop their perspectives on the issue. He also noted that the fact that an NGO was proposing to provide money and support activities should not be underestimated, and that it would allow for better monitoring. He proposed that the MCWG should discuss in detail these issues and make a proposal to the PPCC. The Chairwoman agreed with Mr. Papayannis that further comments on the issue would not be useful, and suggested that a proposal should be developed with help by the MCWG and the ITA, taking into account all UNDP rules and the national legislation, and be further discussed on a next regular or extraordinary meeting of the PPCC.

At that point, Ms. Roumeliotou asked if there was an initial agreement on the synergy of the monitoring proposal with the GEF/UNDP project, and on the provisional steps to be followed, which could be conveyed to SPP's donor. Mr. Dedej said that, as far as the Albanian Government was concerned, there was agreement on the proposal. He concluded by reminding the Committee that co-financing was one of the important indicators for evaluating the GEF/UNDP Prespa Park project. Mr. Papayannis asked whether the contribution of TdV and SPP could be viewed as a gratis contribution to the GEF project. Ms. Kodzoman repeated that her main concern was the best utilisation of funds, and in case the GEF funds the study then an open tender procedure would have to be followed. Ms. Kodzoman thanked the SPP for mobilising the funds and said that the above issues could be discussed between the SPP and UNDP in order to find the best way to utilise those funds. Ms. Malakou repeated that SPP proposed that the project be under the guidance of the MCWG and the PPCC, and that TdV would follow the guidelines given by the MCWG and work with experts from the three countries.

The Chairwoman then closed the agenda item and opened the discussion under **agenda item 5 "Any other business"**. Mr. Ardit Konomi (National Coordinator GEF/UNDP project Albania) started by presenting a short videoclip depicting an interesting discovery of a monoxylon (dug-out boat) in Prespa, dating from 1600-2000 B.C. according to the archaeologists. Concerning the recent phenomenon of algal bloom in Lake Macro Prespa, Mr. Konomi presented a short report on behalf of the Albanian side. He said that on 6 June a sudden change of the colour of the water from green to yellow was observed, followed by the appearance of a large number of dead fish. Specialists from the Department of Fisheries and the Physical and Chemical Laboratory took water and fish tissue samples, and the selling of fish was banned. Mr. Konomi said that samples from deep water resulted to be pure and potable, whereas water samples from the lake shore showed a high load of ammonium. Fish samples showed high levels of ammonium and nitrites, but that could be attributed to the storing conditions. Finally, no specific cause for the phenomenon was identified by the analyses, said Mr. Konomi.

Ms. Malakou briefed the PPCC members about the sampling and analyses on the Greek side. She said that although the phenomenon was noticed on the same day, water and fish tissue samples were taken four days later. It was observed that only bleak (*Alburnus alburnus*) were found dead. The chemical analysis from the laboratories of Florina Prefecture showed double or triple than normal values of ammonium. Malakou said that the data would be shared.

Concerning the FYR of Macedonia side, Ms. Jantinska said that results from the laboratories would be available in the coming few weeks. Mr. Papayannis proposed to convene a meeting of experts from the three countries, if that proved necessary, and the Chairwoman agreed on that. Lastly, Mr. Plessas thanked Mr. Dedej, on behalf of the PPCC, for his readiness to inform the other parts on the phenomenon.

As far as the date and place of the tenth regular meeting of the Committee is concerned, the PPCC members decided to hold the meeting in Greek Prespa, on 6-7 December 2007. The Committee understood it might also hold extraordinary or informal meetings for the GEF/UNDP project, if the need arises. Subsequently, the PPCC members proceeded with the approval of the meeting's conclusions (see below, p.17). The Chairwoman finally thanked the participants for their fruitful contributions, the organisers for the warm hospitality, and the UNDP/GEF project for funding the meeting, and declared the latter closed.

The plenary session of the PPCC was followed by the side meeting on the establishment of the MCWG, a brief report of which can be found at p.19 of this report.

Conclusions

1. At its tenth regular meeting, the PPCC was informed on the results on the Prespa Park GEF project inception workshop held the previous day. The PPCC members with the addition of UNDP will serve as Project Board for the transboundary component of the project. Terms of Reference will be prepared by UNDP and submitted to the Project Board for approval. This will be followed by additional internal arrangements that would enable the Committee to play this role.
2. The PPCC heard a report on activities that took place since the last meeting in Korcha, noted that many activities contributing to the Prespa Park objectives are being developed in the area and recommended that all parties involved in the Prespa Park should distribute and make available their studies and reports for use by any interested party. For that, the PPCC Secretariat is asked to contact main actors and transmit any material gathered to the ITA.
3. The PPCC heard information on several major projects under implementation in the area, including restoration of Golema Reka, KfW activities in Albania and FYR-Macedonia and GEF/ SGP in the two countries.
 - a. The Committee stressed the usefulness of receiving timely information on the planning of such significant projects, so that input from Prespa Park stakeholders can be taken into account in their planning.
 - b. The Committee also asked UNDP to facilitate meetings between fishermen and relevant experts from the three sides in order to discuss and coordinate on fisheries issues.
 - c. Finally, PPCC agreed that it was important that Governments/ UNDP pay attention to the need and opportunity provided in the current period for increasing the capacity of community-based organizations to plan and implement projects in Prespa.
4. The PPCC decided to invite in future meetings the Ohrid Lake Watershed Committee Secretariat as an observer so that experience can be exchanged and synergies developed between the two neighbouring basins.
5. PPCC took note of the trilateral TRABOREMA project, which included considerable transboundary monitoring activities.
6. The Committee then heard an SPP proposal on the development of a transboundary monitoring system. SPP has secured new funds (WWF GR) to contribute to the development of this system and the Committee agreed that the proposed synergy between the SPP and GEF projects was welcomed. The Committee also expressed its initial agreement on the proposed steps to be taken for the development of the transboundary monitoring system. These are to be confirmed by the MCWG and further specified in the future.
7. During the side meeting on the procedures for establishment of a Monitoring and Conservation Working Group (MCWG) consensus was reached on the following:
 - a. Participation: one Government representative, one research institution, one representation from the protected areas, and one representative from the NGOs from each country, MedWet, and ITA as the coordinator.
 - b. All travel and accommodation costs for working group meetings will be covered by UNDP/GEF Transboundary component.
 - c. The MCWG will act as a technical advisory committee.

- d. Links will be established between the MCWG and existing relevant international expert networks.
 - e. Sub-working groups will contribute to the MCWG process as and when required.
 - f. In one month, nomination of the four focal points from each country will be completed by the three Governments.
 - g. The first meeting of the MCWG is proposed to be held on 17 September 2007 in Resen.
 - h. The ITA will work with SPP to prepare a working document for the first MCWG meeting in relation to the transboundary monitoring proposal.
8. Regarding the algal bloom noted in Macro Prespa on 6-7 June 2007, it was agreed that all three sides will share information that may shed some light on the causes of this phenomenon. In particular, they will exchange -through the PPCC Secretariat- the results of laboratory tests on water and fish samples carried out after the event.
9. The next regular PPCC meeting will be held on 6-7 December 2007 in Greek Prespa.
10. Finally, the PPCC expressed its thanks to all participants for their contribution, to the donor community for their continuous interest in the Prespa Park, to UNDP for funding this meeting, and to the Municipality of Resen, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the FYR of Macedonia, and the UNDP Resen office for the organization of the meeting and their warm hospitality.

Side Meeting Report

Procedures for Establishment of the Monitoring and Conservation Working Group

17 June 2007, Pretor, FYR- Macedonia

1730-1830hrs

Background and purpose

The inception workshop of the transboundary component of the GEF project marked the initiation of the transboundary activities. An important component of the transboundary activities identified within the project document is the establishment of the transboundary ecosystem health monitoring system. The GEF project document recognizes the need for a consensus based system driven by a monitoring and conservation working group (MCWG) constituting primary stakeholder institutions in Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece.

The main objectives of this side meeting were:

- to review the proposed composition of the MCWG;
- to define the primary role of the MCWG; agree on the process and timelines for nomination of members of the MCWG;
- to schedule dates for the first meeting of the MCWG and the preparations required for that meeting.

The meeting was chaired by the International Transboundary Advisor.

Main conclusions and next steps

1. Participation: one Government representative, one research institution, one representation from the protected areas, and one representative from the NGOs from each country, MedWet, and ITA as the coordinator.
2. All travel and accommodation costs for working group meetings will be covered by UNDP/GEF Transboundary component.
3. The MCWG will act as a technical advisory committee to the development of and implementation of the transboundary monitoring system.
4. Links will be established between the MCWG and existing relevant international expert networks.
5. Sub-working groups will contribute to the MCWG process as and when required.
6. In one month, nomination of the four focal points from each country will be completed by the three Governments.
7. The first meeting of the MCWG is proposed to be held on 17 September 2007 in Resen.
8. The ITA will work with SPP to prepare a working document for the first MCWG meeting in relation to the transboundary monitoring proposal.

Participants

1. Mr. Alvin Lopez (International Transboundary Advisor, UNDP-GEF Project)
2. Mr. Thymio Papayannis (Secretary of the Culture Working Group, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and MedWet/Ramsar representative to the PPCC)
3. Ms. Darinka Jantinska (Head of Division for Bilateral Cooperation, MoEPP, FYR of Macedonia, and PPCC member)
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6. Ms. Vivi Roumeliotou (Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece, and PPCC Secretariat Member)
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Annex I – List of Abbreviations

ADF	Albanian Development Fund
CRIC	Centro Regionale di Intervento per la Cooperazione (NGO)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EWI	East West Institute
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GTZ	Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit – German Technical Assistance Agency
ITA	International Transboundary Advisor – PP GEF project
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau – German Bank for Reconstruction
MCWG	Monitoring and Conservation Working Group
MedWet	Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative
MoEFWA	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration - Albania
MOEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning – FYR of Macedonia
MoEPPPW	Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works - Greece
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
PPCC	Prespa Park Coordination Committee
PPNEA	Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (NGO)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPP	Society for the Protection of Prespa (NGO)
TdV	Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFD	EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (NGO)

Annex II - List of Participants

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