

Transboundary Consultation Meeting
The Drin Strategic Shared Vision
Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding for the management of
the Extended Drin Basin

Tirana, 25 November 2011

Address by Secretary for Water, Prof. Andreas Andreadakis
Hellenic Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change

Proposed Speaking points

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I participate, representing Greece, at this important Event no doubt a critical milestone in the water Agenda, in the Region of Western Balkans.

I would like to convey the greetings of the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change of Greece, Mr Yorgos Papakonstantinou, and his wishes for a successful meeting.

and of course I would like to thank the government of Albania and in particular Minister Mediu, for taking the initiative to support and host this Meeting.

The Drin Basin links several lakes, wetlands, rivers and groundwaters into a single ecosystem of great significance for the region and for economic activities around it, such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries.

The initiation of the Drin Dialogue and in particular the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding indicates the will of the riparians to work together and to reinforce even further a longstanding cooperation based on the principles of good neighborhood, for the mutual benefit of all people in the region.

Greece, is fully aware of the significance of transboundary cooperation and is keen to promote it. To this end, we are ready and willing to contribute and share our experiences as an EU Member State, enlarging the impact and enhancing the effective implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, in our region.

Apart from the EU and international water-related frameworks such as the Helsinki Convention on Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, our region has to show a good number of bilateral and regional initiatives and agreements on shared waters.

As you probably know, on October the 4th, the EU has announced the official approval of the "Agreement on the Protection and the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area" we signed in 2010. We are, thus, now able to officially launch the process for the ratification of the Agreement by our national Governments and Parliaments. Once the

Agreement is ratified by our countries, it enters into force, and therefore, we can consequently commence its full implementation.

Greece has also signed, in 2010, Joint Ministerial Declarations with Bulgaria and Turkey for transboundary cooperations aiming at the protection and sound management on shared waters. For the implementation of these Declarations, we have already formed Joint Ad Hoc Expert Groups consisting of representatives, from various levels, from the two signatory countries, in each case. These Expert Groups have already been set up and are fully operational with very positive results so far. This signals once more, my country's commitment to transboundary cooperation.

The experience we have gained from steering and participating in these technical bilateral processes is highly transferable and we are willing to provide it as an additional input to our common endeavor in the Drin basin context, aiming to exchange experiences, to learn from each other, to enhance our knowledge-base and to share best practices on sustainable development and prudent use of water resource.

I would like to close my address by expressing our thanks to the organizers of today' Event, namely the UNECE, the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

I am looking forward to the fruitful dialogue that will follow and to the practical outcome of our Meeting.

Thank you