



Eleventh Regular Meeting of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC), 21-22 November 2008, Pyli, Greece

CONCLUSIONS

1. At its eleventh regular meeting, the PPCC heard reports and presentations on a variety of activities carried out since its last meeting in Pretor in June 2007, many of which contribute to the objectives of the Prespa Park. Several activities for the improvement of basic infrastructure have been carried out by the three local authorities. Special note was taken of the local authorities' protocol of collaboration signed in December 2007. Other presentations heard during this session concerned:
 - a. the most significant results so far of the UNDP/GEF project, especially its transboundary component,
 - b. an extensive analysis of ecosystem services in Prespa-Albania carried out under the UNDP/GEF project,
 - c. the KfW-funded project for the Galicica National Park,
 - d. CRIC activities for supporting tourism development in the Prespa National Park-Albania and the Galicica National Park,
 - e. GEF Small Grants Programme projects carried out by the NGOs in the Municipality of Resen,
 - f. the hydrogeological project funded by NATO carried out by a consortium of scientific institutions from the three countries, and
 - g. the draft Tourism Action Plan for the Liqenas Commune and an ongoing project for Sustainable Tourism in the wider Korcha area, both funded by SNV.

PPCC members stressed the need for increased coordination and communication between overlapping activities to maximise benefits. The UNDP/GEF project is a good platform to coordinate many of these initiatives.

2. The PPCC also heard a presentation by the UNDP/GEF International Transboundary Advisor (ITA) on main points in the consultant proposal for the TORs of the Prespa Water Management Working Group (PMMWG) to be established. Various comments submitted by the PPCC members mainly focussed on the size of the WG, its responsibilities and funding sources. It was suggested that a two-tier approach, involving a small technical WG composed mainly of water authorities from the three countries and a larger stakeholder forum, be further explored, as well as the possibility for phasing in the various tasks expected to be performed by the WG. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the PMMWG will be further elaborated and responsibilities prioritised; the TORs are expected to be finalised in January 2009 and the WG is expected to be appointed by April of that year.

3. The ITA then provided information to the Committee on the work and main results so far of the Monitoring and Conservation Working Group (MCWG). These relate mainly to the development of a transboundary monitoring system, while conservation issues are due to be worked upon more intensively during the coming period. The need for coordination with other monitoring programmes currently under preparation in the area, such as the one for the Galicica National Park, with the overall transboundary monitoring system was stressed.
4. The PPCC then heard a presentation on the process for the preparation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/ Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) for the Prespa Park area, carried out in the context of the transboundary component of the UNDP/GEF project and due to last for approximately one year. This is notably going to thoroughly review the SAP adopted in 2002 by the PPCC in order to update it and make it more operational. The PPCC members stressed the need for enough time to be allowed for extensive consultations in the three countries. The ITA noted that there might be a possibility to extend the TDA/SAP time frame. The need to address also the positive aspects of human activities in Prespa in the TDA/SAP exercise was also highlighted by PPCC members, as well as the need to take full account of the work of the two Working Groups currently operating or due to be established.
5. A presentation of the first findings and planning process of the consultancy for the preparation of a sustainable tourism strategy for the area in the context of the UNDP/GEF project was then delivered. There are many past and current initiatives in this sector that need to be taken into account and integrated in this strategy. The need to consider the carrying capacity of tourism activity in Prespa in view of the ecologically sensitive character of the area was also stressed by PPCC members.
6. The Communications Specialist recruited by the UNDP/GEF project then presented to the PPCC the material under development for communicating the Prespa Park and the work of the PPCC, including printed material and a website with specific branding rules. The PPCC commented the Specialist on her comprehensive effort for increased visibility of the Prespa Park process. Regarding approval of the content of this material and website, it was decided that this will be the task of the Chairperson of the Committee with the assistance of the Secretariat. A proposal for celebrating the World Wetlands Day 2009/ ninth anniversary of the Prespa Park, with several activities in the three countries centred on a mobile exhibition was positively received. Concerns were raised, however, on the feasibility of organising this work in the next two months in view of the yet undetermined cost of the proposed activities and the great demands on human resources in all three countries that this involves. The UNDP/GEF transboundary component will further look at the proposal, prioritise activities and propose a relevant operational plan to the PPCC.
7. On the second day of the meeting, two parallel sessions were held on spatial planning issues and water management in the Prespa basin. Their conclusions were endorsed by the PPCC and are appended to the present conclusions.
8. Regarding the PPCC assessment consultancy proposals prepared in the context of the UNDP/GEF project, the PPCC encourages UNDP to address to the three Governments a formal request on whether they consider the time appropriate for initiating a procedure of consultation for the preparation of a trilateral agreement on the Prespa Park. Moreover, the PPCC has agreed to convene on the second half of February 2009 to discuss its operation and the financing of its activities and of its Secretariat. This would be based on a working document to be prepared with contributions from the Chair of the PPCC, its Secretariat and the ITA of the UNDP/GEF project.
9. The Committee decided to hold its twelfth regular meeting in the Albanian side of Prespa in May or June 2009. The exact date and place will be confirmed in the coming months.
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 the Prespa National Forest Management Body and the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works of Greece for funding, organising and hosting this meeting and to the Municipality of Prespa and the Society for the Protection of Prespa for assisting in the organization of the meeting and their warm hospitality. /ends/