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Development of the ENV.net in West Balkan and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration
EuropeAid/132438/C/ACT/Multi
2012/306-642



Research study

Water Management in Albania

Status of transposition

Implementation

The way forward

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List of Acronyms

DBs	Drainage Board
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
EC	European Commission
EQS	Environmental Quality Standards
EU	European Union
HPP	Hydro Power Plant
IEMS	Integrated Environmental Monitoring System
ISES	Inter Sectoral Environmental Strategy
IGSEWE	Institute of Geological Science Energy Water and Environment
IPH	Institute of Public Health
NWC	National Water Council
RBA	River Basin Agency
RBC	River Basin Council
REA	Regional Environmental Agency
UN	United Nation
WFD	Water Framework Directive





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Introduction

The process of European integration aims to bring peace and economic prosperity to Europe through the integration of markets and the presence of a safety net for its citizens. Within the EU and its member-states, management of water resources is one of the most pressing issues of today.

Water is not just another commercial item, but a part of our heritage, thus it must be protected, defended and treated as such. This is the justification for accepting the need to preserve, protect and improve aquatic ecosystems in the first place, and, in the second, for using them sustainably. It means that if the priority is protection, and in order to achieve that protection, it is essential to maintain aquatic ecosystems in good condition, the first objective and the principle behind our actions should be to prevent all deterioration in aquatic ecosystems. Given the above argument, integrated water resource management, applied in a river basin approach, is recognized as a prerequisite for any water-related intervention.

The present report aims at describing the legislation and institutional framework of the sector of Water Management Resources in Albania (river basins, marine water resources, surface and underground water resources), as a Potential Candidate country, and its recent developments and challenges. It presents the results of a desk study undertaken, during the period of January – February 2014, under the ENV.net project funded by EU DG Enlargement. The report is organized in line with the following two main sections:

1. A descriptive/comparative analysis vis-a-vis the actual status of the transposition towards the EU acquis of the legal framework on integrated water management at national level in Albania
2. An analysis on the implementation status of the legal framework on integrated water management at national level, and identification of the flaws leading to lack of implementation. The study is based on information collected with the national authorities, international institutions, civil society organizations, and more generally from all reliable sources available on line.



I. Directive 2000/60/EC on Water Framework

EU Water Directive 2000/60/EC provide a legal framework for the management of water quality within Member States – the Water Framework Directive (WFD). It establishes the basic principles of sustainable water policy in the European Union through an integrated management structure for future European water policy, relying on close cooperation and coherent action at the Community. The WFD seeks close involvement of the public and close cooperation with non-Member States and assistance of relevant international water protection bodies. Based on WFD European member states are committed to achieve good qualitative and quantitative status of all water bodies (including marine waters up to one nautical mile from shore) by 2015.

Two of the main goals of the WFD¹ are the protection and improvement of the aquatic environment and the contribution to sustainable, balanced and equitable water usage. Instruments introduced in the EU water policy to protect and improve all European waters are the following:

- (i) An ecological and holistic water status assessment approach;
- (ii) River basin planning;
- (iii) A strategy for elimination of pollution by dangerous substances;
- (iv) Public information and consultation and finally, financial instruments.

One of the most important concepts of the WFD is the organization and regulation of water management at the level of river basins. To this effect, river basin districts are created in such a way as to comprise not only the surface run-off through streams and rivers to the seas, but the total area of land and seas together with the associated groundwaters and coastal waters. As rivers often cross national borders, representatives from several Member States have to cooperate and work together for the management of the basin (so-called transboundary basins). They should be managed according to River Basin Management Plans, which should provide a clear indication of the way the objectives set for the river basin are to be reached within the required timescale. The Directive envisages a cyclical process, where river basin management plans are prepared, implemented and reviewed every six years.

The WFD aims to protect the physical and biological integrity of aquatic systems and hence the basis of human water withdrawals. Its aim is “good status” of all ground and surface waters (rivers, lakes, transitional waters and coastal waters) in the EU member states, i.e. “good quantitative status” and “good chemical status” (not polluted) by 2015.

¹ Lanz K., Scheuer S. 2001, *EEB Handbook on EU Water Policy under the Water Framework Directive*

In line with regulation of water pollution, WFD requires action at Member State level and Community – wide uniform standards for certain chemicals. Member states should set Environmental Quality Standards (EQSs) for all identified pollutants as being discharged in significant quantities into bodies of surface water. It is required compliance with the EQSs for the achievement of the objective of ‘good ecological status’ by Dec 2015. For ‘High Status’ surface water bodies, Member States must comply with regard to the non-deterioration provision: (i) prevent non-synthetic pollutants discharged in significant quantities from reaching concentrations in the water body above the range normally associated with undisturbed conditions; (ii) and prevent synthetic pollutants discharged in significant quantities from reaching concentrations above the limits of detection.

II. Albania Water/ Water Management Sector - Main problems in water management sector

The country counts a number of 250 natural lakes of different types and categories, where tectonic ones are Lake of Shkodra, Ohrid, Prespa and Butrint etc.; the carstic ones (around 82) are located at the Dumre area; and, glacial ones (around 56) are located in the Alps mountains, Lura lakes, and in the areas of Balgjaj, Martanesh, Shebenik, Valmar etc. Almost 650 artificial reservoirs and lakes are spreaded in the whole territory, where some of them were build for construction of HPP (Fierze, Koman and Vau i Dejes lakes along the Drini cascade, and Ulza and Shkopet lakes along Mati River). Space in the Adriatic and Ionian coast has a total length of about 350 km and a coastline of 475 km. Along this space there are allocated main rivers delta estuaries (Drini, Mati, Ishëm, Shkumbini, Erzeni, Shkumbini, Seman, Vjosa rivers), lagoon system with a general surface of 1500km² (Viluni, Patoku, Karavastase, Narta and Pashaliman lagoons), sandy and rocky beaches, ligatines, sandy dunes systems, forests etc².

Albania is a country, whose surface water and ground water resources far exceed their usage. Most of economic activities relay on utilization of water resources, where over 90% of energy production comes from HydroPower Plants (HPPs), and agriculture fully depends on irrigation. Also other sectors of economy like mining, industrial sector and tourism are also relaid on clean and sufficient fresh water resources.

During the last decade, monitoring activities of water resources have been carried along the basins catchment in the whole territory of the country: in Drini, Mati, Ishem-Erzen, Shkumbini, Seman, Vjosa River basins, and in the coastal Ionian area. Several monitoring stations are established along the coastal line in main beaches area of the country, as Velipoja, Shëngjini, Durrës, Kavajë, Vlora, Dhërmi, Himarë, Borsh, and Saranda. Data obtained from these monitoring campaigns, are published every year on the Report of Environmental Conditions, publhed by the Ministry of Environment. Still implementation of

² Raport i Gjendjes së Mjedisit në Shqipëri për vitin 2011, Ministria e Mjedisit



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EU Water Framework, inventory and assessment mechanism of the status of water resources require further improvements. Apart from this, several steps have been made in regard for preparation of various strategic documents to set out an appropriate legal framework for protection, preservation and management of water resources.

During the last 3 years (2010-2013), Ministry of Environment implemented a National Monitoring Project³ through the expansion and consolidation of an operational Integrated Environmental Monitoring System (IEMS), by using environmental standards and EU directives as a general reference framework. Overall objective of this project consisted on improving quality of environment in Albania, prevention from environmental degradation and pollution, and support towards environmental acquis through formulating and implementing appropriate policies supported by a consolidated environmental monitoring capacity. In regard to water management resources, first it was conducted a desk review of existing data for the assessment of the water resources, establishing both water resources inventory for Albania and utilization patterns in the country. A delineation of the aquifers, definition of the GIS maps for the ground water aquifers and allowing a rational development of water resources monitoring network was developed, followed by the development of a national inventory for water resources taking into account the preparation of the inventory for “Mati” river basin. The inventory for five other rivers basins (Drin-Bune, Ishem-Erzeni, Shkumbini, Semani, and Vjose) had produced the Water Resources Inventory for the whole country. The final delineation of main groundwater aquifers and temporary coding had been performed together with AGS hydro-geologists in April 2012. Main groundwater aquifers and 55 groundwater bodies have been delineated and the related GIS maps have been produced by the AGS (NRC Water).

The evaluation system was based on a series of requirements with particular attention to obligations under the WFD and related legislation. The ability and potential of institutions to conform to ISO quality control requirements and other prerequisites had also been investigated. Evaluation had indicated that the Albanian Geological Survey (AGS) was deemed to be the most appropriate institution to function as the NRLW due to its current operational competence nationally, as well as the capability of the AGS to monitor water “status”.

Almost six years from now, Ministry of Environment had been assisted by projects funded by EU, on Implementation of National Plan for Approximation of Environmental Legislation (INPAEL 2009-2011), followed by Strengthening Environmental Law Enforcement in Albania (SELEA 2012-2014)⁴. Their assistance to the mInistry consisted on: (i) identification of the legal acts and plans/programmes that would bridge the gaps in transposition and implementation activities; (ii) review and assessment of the

³ CEMSA Project (Consolidating the Environmental Monitoring System in Albania) 2012, Ground water Monitoring in Albania

⁴ <http://www.selea.al/>



current status of transposition and implementation planning of the environmental Acquis; (iii) identification of the Directives to be transposed; (iv) identification of legal acts and implementation of plans/programmes to be prepared (in particular in the sub-sectors of air, water, waste, nature, chemicals, maritime pollution and industrial pollution control).

Regarding water subsector, SELEA had been assisting the Ministry on developing new legislation framework through transposing respective requirements of the environmental acquis into the national legislation⁵. Also they have assisted the drafting of a number of strategies and planning documents in the water sector as Protected Areas Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans etc.

Apart from these significant attempts, it is rare to not encounter heavy pollution of water resources, especially when compared with the plentiful freshwater resources. These problems of quality are exacerbated by a growing demand for limited water resources in some parts of the country. A comprehensive and sufficient monitoring system is missing, followed by a weak regulatory and financial framework together with the lack of a longterm strategy, which should act as a schedule for all activities and projects in the water sector. Given the situation, the country has a fragile and fragmented management of water resources.

III. Actual legal and institutional framework of Water Management in Albania

Strategies documents, policies and programs

Water policies and legislation in Albania, as a requirement to be an EU member, are under process of further approximation to fundamental changes. Giving the situation, Albania has started a process of revising its legal and institutional framework regarding water management in accordance with European Union Water Framework Directive under the support of SELEA project.

A range of strategic documents to set out an appropriate legal framework for protection and management of water resources has started to be prepared by several ministries of the line, which are in charge on water sector management, but an updated water resources management strategy including mid-term and long-term financial planning is still on the way to be prepared.

In terms of strategic instruments, River Basins Management Plans play an important role, as they describe the approach and offer the appropriate tools to ensure sustainable management of water resources. Development of Management Plan of Mati River Basin is already completed in 2010, by the Ministry of Environment, under the assistance of INPAEL project (Implementation of National Plan for

⁵ New law recently approved "On integrated management of water resources"



Approximation of Environmental Legislation) funded by EU, and is under the process of being properly implemented. In the meantime, several seminars and training programs, for the implementation of this plan, are being developed by the civil society in collaboration with the state institutions to train local stakeholders and interested groups about: (i) Water Frame Work Directive; (ii) national legal requirements from the new law; (iii) Role and function of River basins; (iv) the missing role of civil society related to water issues, and several other issues related to water management and usage.

In 2010, Plan Management of Wetland Area of Kune-Vain 2010-2019, Natural Managed Reservoir (IUCN category IV), in the framework of the second component of the Project for Integrated Management of Waters and Ecosystems, co-financed by the EBI (European Bank of Investments) and GEF (General Environmental Fund), under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, was prepared by the Center for Environmental Impact Assessment contracted by the Ministry. The plan aimed future conservation of the area, through preparation of long-term action plan for management of natural resources and creation of economic incentives to ensure longterm and sustainbale development; identification of priority measures and action plans to improve conservation of Protected Areas; proposing instruments that could stimulate community collaboration for conservation attempts; and proposing measures to enforce capacity building.

Further more, for Erzen-Ishëm river basin had been completed a monitoring process of water resources and it will continue further with development of management plan for the basin according to Water Framework Directive⁶ requirements, by the Ministry of Environment

In 2007 it was adopted the Strategic Action Plan for Lake Shkodra, and Buna and Drini river between Albania and MonteNegro, and it was signed an Understanding Agreement for River Drini⁷. The 10-year strategic action plan aimed to assist government units and stakeholders in Albania and MonteNegro to focus on improving environmental management by supporting sustainable economic use of natural resources, by defining the appropriate actions and programs in the area.

From 2007 catchment basins management has been increased with 17% in compliance with their actual management plans. Meanwhile, compared to 2007, compliance of water quality indicators (BOD₅, NH₄, DO₂, NO₃ and P) with EU standards has been raised with 8%⁸.

In 2004 Ministry of Environment, under the MedWet Coast Project⁹, prepared the Management Plan of Protected landscape of Vjosa River and Narta Lagoon. The plan gives a complete frame of conservation

⁶ Action Plan for Implementation SAA_Ministry of Integration

⁷ Called "A Common Strategic Vision for River Drini"

⁸ Inter-Sectoral Environmental Strategy 2013-2012, Ministry of Environment

⁹



and remediation of the wetland complex, through engagement of local community, local state authorities, civil society and other interested parties. Also the plan defines Protected Landscape zoning (Category IV IUCN) of some special areas with natural and biodiversity values.

National Water Strategy of 2004 is under revision, due to several changes of the legal and institutional framework. For a better administration of water resources there has been developed and presented to the National Water Council for approval, the register of water resources and river inert permits, through development of a database. These data will serve to prepare the electronic cadaster of water resources in Albania¹⁰.

Primary legislation on water management¹¹

The old law on “Water Reserve” no. 8093, date 21.03.1996¹², however for the time being into force provided a comprehensive legal framework for the management of Albanian’s water resources within Albania’s borders with the exception of medicinal, mineral and thermal waters, it did not fully comply with the European legislation. It was considered as the first attempt to introduce a sound and sustainable water management system according to EU principles and directives, by regulating conservation, development and utilization of water reserves; their protection from pollutions, and establishment of a distinct system of permits, authorizations and concessions for different kinds of water use; and introduction of the concept of financial exemptions for persons who reduce their water consumption or discharges into water.

Apart from these, the old law did not take in consideration the following considerations: (i) Definition of the state body that establishes, manages and updates the Registry of Water Resources, which archives all authorisations, permits and concessions for usage of water resources; (ii) Monitoring of inland marine, surface and underground water sources and protected areas; (iii) Management of inland marine water sources and natural resources, of curative waters, minerals, termomineral and geothermal water sources; (iv) Possibility of issuing laws for the approximation of legislation as, mainly for monitoring the quality of surface water or groundwater, which requires the involvement of several state bodies; (v) Forecast sanctions for the one who infringe the law, mainly to polluters of curative waters, minerals, termomineral and geothermal water sources.

Law 111/2012, date 15.12.2012 “On Integrated of Water Resources”¹³ – it fully complies with EU Directive 2000/60/EC of European Parliament and the Council, date 23.10.2000 “Establishment of

⁹ Financed by GEF/UNDP MM Ruajtja e Ligatinave dhe Ekosistemeve Bregdetare ne Rajonin e Mesdheut

¹⁰ Action Plan for Implementation SAA_Ministry of Integration

¹¹ Mejdiaj B., Ponari A., *Legal protection of Transitional Waters in Albania, NOMOS+PHYSIS” (LAW AND NATURE), CIVIL NON-PROFIT SOCIETY*

¹² Repealed after the approval of the new law no.11, date 15.11.2012 “On integrated management of water resources”

¹³ Within 2016 it is forecasted to approve all bylaws according to the new law requirements



a legal framework for community actions in the field of water policies”. The aim of the law focuses on: (i) environmental protection and improvement of water, surface water, either temporary or permanent, internal sea waters, territorial waters, exclusive economic zones, continental shelf, transboundary waters, groundwater, and their status; (ii) security, protection, development and rational utilization of water resources; (iii) equitable distribution of water resources, by using goals and direction their effective administration; (iv) protection of water resources from pollution, overuse and consumption on actual needs; (v) determination of the institutional framework, at national and local level, for the implementation of a national policy for the administration and management of water resources for the good of the community and social and economic interests of the country.

Law No. 9115, dated 24.07.2003, on “Environmental Treatment of Polluted Water” –a specif legal act that states the need for treatment of polluted water before it is discharged into the sea, preventing in this way pollution of transitional waters. The purpose of the law stated in its first article *“is to protect the environment and human health from the negative impact of polluted waters by setting rules for environmental treatment of such waters and defining binding obligations upon subjects who discharge polluted waters in the environment”*. The law has power on polluted urban waters, polluted industrial waters, according to specific industries; waters resulting from irrigation of the land; and polluted waters of any kind. The law and terminologies used in the law are in line with the legal international documents (different international Conventions) and EU Directives.

Given the provision of the lattes law, there was approved a **DCM no.177, date 31.03.2005 “On Permitted norms for liquid discharges and criteria for environmental zoning of rivers or sea waters”**, aiming to prevent, decrease and avoid rivers and sea waters pollution caused by hazardous wastes. The DCM defined measurable and controlled discharges coming from the water treatment plant, in line with EU norms, representing a useful contribution to the national legal framework regarding water protection. In this regard, another important element to practical application of this decision was the fact that it defines criteria for environmental zoning of waters (river and sea), divining them into sensitive and less sensitive waters, followed by special discharging regulations and norms for each case.

Law No. 9103, dated 10.07.2003, on “The Protection of Transboundary Lakes” – this law is specifically focused on water environment and aplicabable to the following: a) the albanian part of Shkodra lake; b) the albanian part of Ohrid lake; c) the albanian part of Prespa lakes. It aims the environmental protection of transboundary lakes in their natural state, by providing the appropriate conditions (through promoting useful activities in compliance with the requirements of the sustainable development principle) for the development of life and ecosystems in these lakes, and also stopping activities that may threaten them. In addition, unique ecosystems with international values, as the transboundary lakes, had been proclaimed as protected areas by Decision of Council of Ministers.

Albania has signed and supported several international conventions and protocols during the last two decades on water management resources as the following: **(i)** Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Sea, Barcelona Convention, Barcelona, 1976; **(ii)** Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea; **(iii)** Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities; **(iv)** Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea; **(v)** Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; **(vi)** Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Sea; **(vii)** Protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil; **(viii)** Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean Sea.

Given the necessity to incorporate into the Albanian national legislation, requirements stated in the above stated Conventions and Protocols; it was developed and approved the **law No. 8905, dated 06.06.2002, on “Protection of Marine Environment from Pollution and Damage”**. The law aims to protect the marine environment of the country from pollution and damages and to prevent and avoid possible impacts that can be caused by the human activities in coastal and sea areas, which have a negative impact on water quality, damage water sources, endanger the fauna and flora, threaten human health, by making more difficult the normal development of activities in this environment.

Institutional framework

The National Water Council, ministries and national agencies

In Albania, water resources management involves a lot of ministries and other institutions at regional and local level. Due to this fragmented institution framework, sometimes coordination between subordinate levels institutions with each other and the central level ones, as they focus on their own sector's water use, is not always sufficient.

Institutions in charge to manage protection and development of water qualities in the country are: Ministry of Environment and institutions under its responsibility, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Enterprise, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Health and institution under its responsibility and local government units.

Ministry of Environment is the principle responsible institution to draw up and implement policies, strategies, national plans and legislation for protection of aquatic resources from pollution; rational

exploitation of water resources; improvement of aquatic environment; protection of inland water surface, temporary water surface, marine water, ground water and their status.

National Water Council (NWC)¹⁴ is the main central decision – making institution directed by the Prime Minister, which has the responsibility to approve water national strategy and national plan for water resources. In 2011¹⁵ an important reform was developed in the water sector, when the NWC Technical Secretariat was replaced by the General Directorate of Water Administration (a Ministry of Environment inner directorate) provided the NWC with its three directorates. It is responsible for providing and implementing the legal, policy and strategic framework in the water sector, and for screening and reviewing the technical content of EIA, which is required for all projects that could have a significant impact on the environment, and for issuing environmental consents and permits for larger activities.

NEA¹⁶ (National Environmental Agency under the supervision of Ministry of Environment) is responsible for monitoring quality and quantity of water resources. Also it has supervision to the work of relevant institutes on monitoring activities, being the main beneficiary of the data provided by these institutes. Alongside NEA, various institutions are involved in monitoring water resources as follows:

- IGSEWE (Institute of Geological Science Energy, Water and Environment under the supervision of Politechnic University of Tirana), conducts the assessment of surface water quality for rivers, lakes, underground and marine water and the monitoring of rainfall, temperature and other hydrometeorological parameters;
- IPH (Institute of Public Health under the responsibility of Ministry of Health) is responsible for monitoring drinking water.

River basin authorities and state institutions¹⁷

At local level Water Resources Management are organized within six administrative river basins (Drini, Mati, Ishmi–Erzeni, Shkumbini, Semani and Vjosa). Based on this approach the following institutions are the one responsible for implementing issues of water resource management at local level:

- 6 river basin councils (RBCs), headed by prefects of the regions, act as the administrative body; each is responsible for the protection, development, distribution and operation of water resources within its own basin boundaries;

¹⁴ CMD no.125, date 02.03.2006 “On Establishment of WNC”, defining that WNC comprises 7 ministers that manage different problems in the water sector

¹⁵ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2012, Albania Environmental Performance Reviews

¹⁶ Remak: DCM no.46, date 29.01.2014 “On establishment of Inspectorate of State for Environment Forestry and Water” – central and regional offices

¹⁷ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2012, *Albania Environmental Performance Reviews*

- 6 river basin agencies (RBAs) act as executive and technical bodies of the RBCs under the supervision of the GDWA (General Directorate of Water Administration); they are responsible for on-site inspection of all activities in terms of water resource usage; however, they have little authority to enforce legal and regulatory procedures, resulting in poor coordination of local sectors in water resources management;
- 13 drainage boards (DBs), supervised by MoARDWA (Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Water Administration), are currently the key operators responsible for major irrigation systems, drainage management and flood protection including reservoir dam safety;
- 12 REAs (Regional Environmental Agencies) are responsible for the permitting and enforcement of environmental legislation.

Transboundary issues and international cooperation

To insure a sustainable and integrated management of water resources, considering the transboundary character of surface water and groundwater in Albania territory, clear defined criteria and responsibilities had been the focus of several legal and institutional developments withing neoghbourhood countries, enabling financial and technical assistance to be provided for implementation and monitoring according to international standards and procedures. First steps were signed with the approval of DCM no. 635, date 21.11.2001 “On Establishment of a Government Commission for Water Problems with Neighbouring Countries”, and strengthen by the following important agreements¹⁸ and cooperation signed in years:

- The Memorandum of Understanding with Government of MonteNegro, signed on 19.06.2010, serves as the main guideline for the management of the transboundary water resources;
- Cooperation with the Government of Greece began in 2001. In 2008, both countries agreed to approve the inner regulation related to the Vjosa river basin, by signing an agreement for the establishment of Permanent Comission Albanian – Greek for transboundary fresh waters of river Vjosa and Drino and Prespa lakes;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between Government of Albanina and Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia “For Protection and Sustainbale Development of Ohrid Lake and its water catchment” was signed on 17.06.2004;
- Cooperation with Government of Kosovo (UN-administered region, Security Council resolution 1244) regarding transboundary water issues began in September 2010.

Also in this regard, several transboundary projects are developed to strengthen sustainbale management of transboundary water resources, as the one for Ohrid Lake, funded by the World Bank and implemented by Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where it was developed a

¹⁸United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2012, *Albania Environmental Performance review*, and Ministry of Environment, <http://www.mjedisi.gov.al/al/programi/burimet-ujore/marreveshje>





basis for the joint management and protection of Ohrid Lake. During project implementation there were developed the following: (i) Integrated land-use “spatial” plan for MK-Prespa and Local Environmental Action Plan for AL-Prespa; (ii) Water Management Plan; (iv) Forests Management Plans; (v) Transboundary Monitoring System; (vi) Upgraded Information Management and Geographic Information System¹⁹.

Then, the Adriatic Sea Partnership (2006-2009) under the lead of the REC addressed all States bordering the Adriatic Sea. The project aimed to increase donor interest and generate further funding and established the Adriatic Sea Partnership as an operative international body to act as a common platform for regional cooperation to protect the Adriatic Sea. Through various international initiatives, the Adriatic countries have begun to make commitments for protection and management of the Adriatic Sea region including: (i) the Contingency Plan for the Adriatic; (ii) the Ballast Water Management Plan; (iii) the Integrated Coastal Zone Management. Another transboundary project addressed the protection and sustainable use of the Dinaric karst aquifer system which is shared by four countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro).

IV. What says the EU Annual Progress Report 2013 for Albania?

The extracts from the resourceful Annual Progress Report 2013²⁰ delivered by the European Commission (EC) shows below the status of transposition in October 2013 related to Water Quality and Water Management.

.....

In the area of water quality, the Law on integrated water management was adopted in November and a water supply and sewerage master plan was finalized in April. Implementation of the acquis remains at a very early stage. Centralized wastewater collection only exists in the larger cities. Four wastewater treatment plants are functioning while three other plants are completed but not yet operational and two more are under construction. Current financial and human investments are not sufficient to ensure the proper functioning and maintenance of existing wastewater treatment plants. The capacity of public water companies to manage basic services in delivering drinking water and waste water treatment is weak. Development of river basin management plans, including at regional level, is at an early stage.

.....

Source: EU Annual Progress Report 2013 Albania

¹⁹ Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning 2008, *Integrated Management of Shared Lakes and Basins, Ohrid and Prespa Lake –Transboundary Cooperation*

²⁰ Ministry of Integration, *EU Annual Progress Report 2013 for Albania*, <http://www.mie.gov.al/>



V. Recommendations

Clear definition of institutions competencies involved in water resources management, improvement of inter institutional coordination, further legislation approximation and implementation enforcement²¹, drafting management plans for all river basins in compliance with EU Water Directive 2000/60/EC and EU Flooding Directive 2007/60/EC, and establishment of the electronic cadastra for water resources; drafting National Strategy of Integrated Water Management; and establishment of environmental quality norms for surface water resources in compliance with EU Directive, are some of the immediate steps to be accomplished within a short and mid - term period in water sector management.

Taking in mind the latest development, as the preparation of Management Plan of Mati River Basin is a completed process, it should be followed by the followings:

- Approval of measures planned for its implementation;
- Establishment of a electronic database;
- GIS data gathering and maps²²;
- Capacity building of local actors responsible and trainings to improve water sector data reporting for the European Environmental Agency.

The monitoring process of permits for exploitation of river basin and their inert materials should be improved, followed by information and awareness session with local authorities, CSOs, groups of interest for protection and conservation of quality and quantity of water resources.

According to the ISES (2013-2020), riverbeds rehabilitation should be 60% (by 2015) compared to the situation in 2011, and 90% (by 2020). Further more, monitoring of legislation implementation and routine controls to ensure good administration and protection of water resources, quality of groundwater resources; enforcement of law implementation to protect environment from activities that damage and pollute water resources, and the one that exploit river basins should continue at regular basis.

Also collaboration and meetings with neighbor countries for common exploitation of cross-border water resources according to environmental standards should follow a continual improvement approach.

²¹ According to the "Inter Sectoral Environmental Strategy 2013-2020, Albania should accomplish 60% of compliance of water sector legislation with the EU one within 2015, and 100% compliance within 2020

²² According to ISES (2013-2020), by 2014 there should be completed 100% the inventarisation of water resources compared to the one developed in 2011



During the last decade, management of water resources had undergone several changing development reforms. Still the institutional framework for management of water resources is fragmented and needs further improvements as the followings:

The Ministry of Environment²³ should:

- Finalize and adopt the national strategy for integrated management of water resources;
- Implement the following components of the Mati River Basin Pilot Management Plan, as development of specific quality objectives for all water body types, economic analysis of water pollution and water management, stakeholders' involvement, public participation and awareness;
- Adopt a special regulation, which defines and describes the procedures for drafting, reviewing and approving river basin management plans;
- Develop river basin management plans for all river basins.

National Water Council²⁴ should:

- Improve capacity river basin councils and river basin agencies to enable them to enforce legal and regulatory procedures, and ensure a sustainable management of water resources;
- Strengthen river basin agencies' responsibilities, especially in terms of coordination of local sectors, and establish them as recognised partners in water resources management at the local level.

²³ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2012, *Albania Environmental Performance reviews*

²⁴ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2012, *Albania Environmental Performance reviews*



Annex I

According to **law no. 8906, date 06.06.2002 “On Protected Areas”**, in the table below are all water areas approved by Council of Ministers Decision as protected areas with special status:

AQUATIC PROTECTED AREAS PER CATEGORY		
National parks (Category II)	Specially Protected Natural Areas	Water/Terrestrial Protected Landscapes
CMD no. 80, date 18.02.1999 to declare Prespa in Pogradec as “National Park” and “Terrestrial/Aquatic Protected Landscape” ²⁵	CMD no 531, date 31.10.2002, “To declare Butrinti wetland complex and territories around it as Specially Protected Natural Area and its inclusion in the wetland list of international importance, especially as habitat for aquatic poultry” ²⁶	CMD no 680, date 22.10.2004 “To declare Vjosë-Nartë wetland as Water/Terrestrial Protected Landscape” ²⁷
CMD, no.82, date 02.03.2000 to declare “National park under the state protection of the archeological area of Butrint” ²⁸	CMD no. 683, date 02.11.2005 “To declare wetland complex of Shkodra Lake and the area of Buna River as specially protected natural area, and its inclusion in the wetland list of international importance, especially as habitat for aquatic poultry” ²⁹	CMD, no. 682, date 02.11.2005 “To declare Buna River and its surrounding wetland territories as Water/Terrestrial Protected landscape” ³⁰
CMD no. 693, date 10.11.2005 “To declare Wetland Complex of Butrint as National Park” ³¹		
CMD no 687, date 19.10.2007 “To declare, with widen surface, of natural ecosystem of		

²⁵ Official Journal, no. Extra August, year 2000, pg. 139, date 28.08.2000

²⁶ Official Journal, no. 70, date 12.11.2002, pg. 1969

²⁷ Official Journal, no. 77, date 29.10.2004, pg. 5764

²⁸ Official Journal, no.15, date 21.06.2000, pg. 714

²⁹ Official Journal, no. 91, date 01.12.2005, pg. 2910

³⁰ Official Journal no. 91, date 01.12.2005, pg. 2907

³¹ Official Journal no. 91, date 01.12.2005, pg. 2913

Divjakw-Karavasta National Park ³²	as		
Water Area approved as Speacilly Protected Natural Ecosystem : CMD no.413, date 22.8.1994 "To declare Karavasta Lagoon and Divkjaka park as specially protected natural ecosystem, to be included in the Ramsar convent list" ³³			
Water Area approved as Managed Natural Reserve : CMD no 684, date 02.11.2005 "To declare Albanian area of Shkodra Lake 'Mana' as managed natural reserve" ³⁴			
Water Area approved as Special Protected Area : Decision of National Water Council no.2, date 21.11.2010 "To declare water catchment area of Bogova sources, as special protected area"			

³² Official Journal no. 144, date 30.10.2007, pg. 4017, and Official Journal no. 87, date 11.06.2008, pg. 3824

³³ Official Journal no.17, year 1994, pg.17

³⁴ Official Journal, no. 91, date 01.12.2005, pg. 2912



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no. 144, date 30.10.2007, pg. 4017, and Official Journal no. 87, date 11.06.2008, pg. 3824; (ix) no.17, year 1994, pg.17; (x) no. 91, date 01.12.2005, pg. 2912

Law no. 8093, date 21.03.1996 on “Water Reserve”

Law no. 8905, dated 06.06.2002, on “Protection of Marine Environment from Pollution and Damage”

Law No. 9103, dated 10.07.2003, on “The Protection of Transboundary Lakes”

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