

**Co-PLAN** “Institute for Habitat Development”

Universiteti POLIS / POLIS University

Rr. Bylis 12, Kashar, Shqiperi Albania

Postal Box: 2995

Tel: +355 4 240 74 23/4

Web: [www.co-plan.org](http://www.co-plan.org)

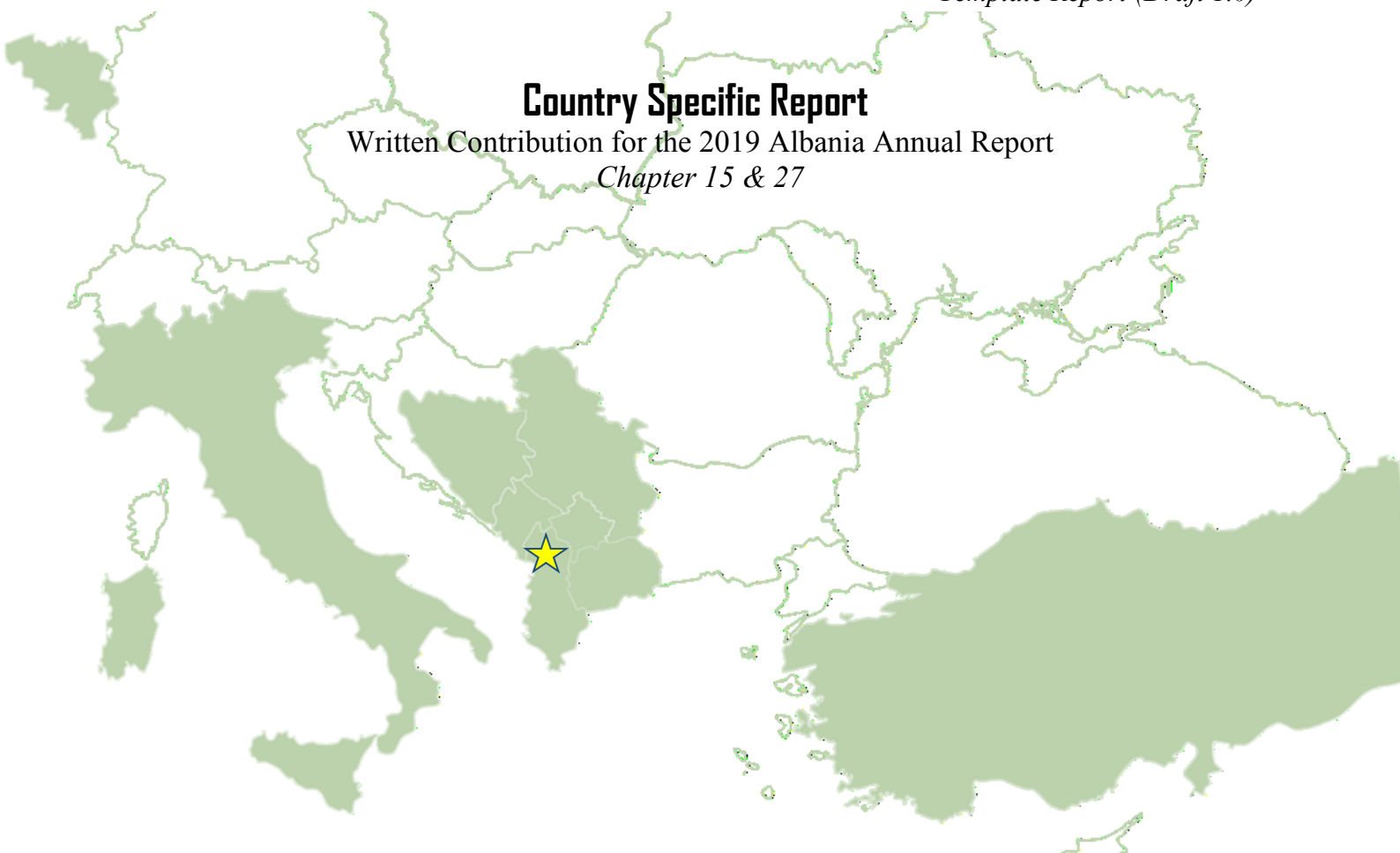
Tirane, 01/ 11/ 2018

*Template Report (Draft 1.0)*

## Country Specific Report

Written Contribution for the 2019 Albania Annual Report

*Chapter 15 & 27*



### Under the Env.Net Project:

“Environmental Network factoring the environmental portfolio for Western Balkans and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda”

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. <i>Project Context .....</i>	4
1.2. <i>Environmental Status in Albania .....</i>	4
1.3. <i>Summary of the Report.....</i>	5
<b>2. Fundamentals .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. <i>Environmental Rights.....</i>	6
2.2. <i>Environmental Accountability &amp; Governance.....</i>	6
2.3. <i>Environmental Monitoring .....</i>	6
2.4. <i>Fight against crime to environment.....</i>	6
<b>3. Obligations of Membership.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. <i>Energy (Under Chapter 15).....</i>	7
3.1.1. <i>Security of Supply, Market, Hydropower .....</i>	7
3.1.2. <i>Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Performance, Classification and Audit in Housing and Industry ....</i>	7
3.2. <i>Environment (Under Chapter 27).....</i>	8
3.2.1. <i>Water Quality and Management .....</i>	8
3.2.2. <i>Climate Change.....</i>	9
3.2.3. <i>Air Quality.....</i>	10
3.2.4. <i>Noise and Light Pollution.....</i>	10
3.2.5. <i>Waste Management.....</i>	11
3.2.6. <i>Wildlife and Nature Protection .....</i>	11
<b>4. References / Bibliography .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. Introduction

Albania's outlook continues to be pro-EU, as is shown by the commitment undertaken by central government. Currently the ex-Ministry of European Integration is operating as independent directory for integration within the main body of each Ministry within the existing central organigram.

Although a candidate country since 2014 Albania missed the chances to open negotiations within 2018 due to institutional readiness. Most likely negotiations will occur during mid-2019, still at the moment there is not a consistent political discussion driven by EU entry requirements. Daily policy has not oriented towards the European spirit of democracy, sustainability and quality of nature and life, values and socio-economic development in the whole country. Hence, processes on paper are not supported by local buy-in, institutional readiness, and policy analyses and impact assessments to allow for genuine cross-sectoral and multi-level engagement in the process. On paper, in Albania policy frameworks are already in place or expected to be developed.

A major issue Albania is currently facing is linked with environmental deterioration of habitats, land, air and water quality, leading to a crucial decrease of the life quality and standards. Main reforms such as forestry and hunting moratorium, waste and water, as well as strategies on exploiting hydrological system for energy purposes have had a considerable impact in the overall development of Albania.

There is an existential gap between these national frameworks and local reforms on the ground that have a meaningful impact on the lives of Albanians. Both environment and energy sector have to deal with major issues like effective justice reform, transforming the public administration into a responsive civil service, tackling corruption, enhancing transparency, and fostering regional collaboration.

Albania's approach towards integrating renewables into the existing energy sector and policy framework has come into focus mainly as a requirement of the European integration process. Besides approximating legislation and adopting a national energy plan, the government has supported for years the water-based energy production and recently has also opened a window of opportunity for solar energy.

However, the 'Europeanization' process and progress in the energy sector for Albania can only be tracked in regard to legalisation adaptation with EU acquis while implementation and actual public investments do not reflect an increase of efficiency in consumption or diversification of production sources. Advancements are made in terms of the legislation approximation process. The government has transposed the Energy Community Treaty and Climate Mitigation obligation from Paris Agreement into the Law nr.7/2017 'Incentive for Energy Production and Usage from Renewable Sources'. Moreover, the 'National Action Plan on Renewable Resources 2018-2020' (KM, 2018) was revised, taking into consideration obligations deriving from commitments undertaken since the Paris Agreement. However, related implementation measures are missing, or have been very slow.

The current policies and strategies in place, relevant to climate change are: *Albanian Strategy for Health System Adaptation into the Climate Change 2011-2021*, *Environmental Crosscutting Strategy 2015-2020*, *General National Plan on Territorial Development 2015-2030*, (AKPT, 2015) *National Integrated Water Resources Management 2018-2027* and *Integrated Crosscutting Coastal Plan* (AKPT, 2016). However, Albania still needs to develop and adopt a national strategy on climate change in line with the EU framework (European Commission, 2018). The concrete steps in this regard are still limited, as a result of waiting for the adoption of the law on climate change. In our opinion, beside the unquestionable need for a National Strategy on Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation, the Strategy should have been part of the discussion together with the new law on Climate Change. Given the fact that a strategy should tackle most of the important fields such as environment, energy, territorial planning, waters, agriculture, it should and will require a certain revision of the existing approved plans as mentioned above. Adaptive planning including resilience of all main sectors is mainly not included in all of above agenda.

### 1.1. Project Context

Environmental Network (ENV.net) is a EU Funded project operating in Western Balkans and Turkey, aiming to contribute to the stimulation of an enabling environment for civil society and pluralistic media, as effective and accountable independent actors in dialoguing with Governments for influencing environmental policy and decision making processes. ENV.net is currently acting as an alliance with regard to policy elaboration on environmental issues, orienting the debate in circular economy and climate change issues, involving grass-root environmental CSOs, media and society at large in the Western Balkans and Turkey region.

Recent natural occurrences such as repeated massive floods, and the EU accession obligations the Western Balkans (WB) and Turkey region must fulfil, highlight the immediacy of action required in the field of climate change and environmental protection. For it to be effective, such action requires a solid pan-regional commitment in monitoring, advocating and awareness raising in home countries and engagement in policy discussions at EU level. It also requires well-established and qualified civil society and media actors to generate positive pressure on the relevant institutions, and keep the citizens informed in a way that is accessible and actionable. Studies show that, despite efforts made in this regard, the WB and Turkey region faces a number of challenges impeding progress, such as: limited local buy-in of the reforms, conflicting legislation, lack of a critical mass that can monitor developments and exert pressure on policy-makers, weak dialogue with institutions, poor understanding and coverage of climate change and environmental news, and very sparse resonance with current EU environment-related discussions such as circular economy aspects.

This sub chapter shall be unified for all partners, where a short summary of the Env.Net project will be provided by Co-Plan.

In response to these needs, ENV.net, an active regional network and advocacy actor of five years, herein proposes the action “ENV.net factoring the environmental portfolio for WB and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda”. The proposed action aims to work on improving evidence-based policy-making and policy-influencing on climate change and environmental legislation in each of the ENV.net partner countries. The network aims to generate region-representative evidence-supported input to contribute to EU discussions on matters of climate change and environment, and to explore and introduce to the region new inter-related aspects such as circular economy. In the process, the network foresees to also technically and financially support civil society organizations and media in each of the network partner countries, to better understand and work on these issues.

### 1.2. Environmental Status in Albania

The official environmental status in Albania is subject to an overall estimation and pre-monitoring practice summarized as the Environmental Status Report. Published and elaborated by NEA<sup>i</sup> with the support of Ministry of Environment and thematically related government bodies, agencies and institutions. Such report, as the only one, reflecting environmental problems and appointing directly environmental concerns and emergencies has not so far achieved to enrich or even affect policy making and the overall environmental legislation. That said, the reason behind relies within the scientific data and facts used to express a conclusion and articulate a potential/optional solution. There is a lack on both credibility and expertise of resources and manners operated by this agency that are reflected on the quality and coverage of the yearly report. From 2015 data collected and monitored for air quality, water quality, noise, erosion, forestry, agriculture, mobility, energy, climate and not only are based mainly on assumptions (due to statistically unacceptable monitored data) and laboratory tools with expired calibration while chemical analysis are conducted rarely due to the ridiculous financial support this Agency receives on a yearly basis.

A more deepen overview will be described on the dedicated subchapters below. Here a rather general overview will be summarized in order to ensure a clear reflection of what's the actual environmental realm in Albania.

Starting with the most valuable element in our society, water, which in general Albania has always proclaimed to have a generous amount of available surface and underground waters. Still more than 67% of population is supplied with non-drinkable water and more than 88% do receive water supply under a

certain schedule between 4-8hrs per day. This situation inherited due to lack of investments on renewing physically the water supply sector and most important because of the contamination of water sources/basins used for initial intake.

Regarding wastewater Albania has invested already in construction of at least 12 WWTP mainly with primary treatment technology serving mainly to high density urbanized areas or urban areas near rivers and lakes. While attempting to reduce the amount of waste discharged through sewer directly in surface waters Albania remains at an early stage since the all bathing waters nearby rivers delta have a poor quality. (European Environmental Agency, 2017) While an even aggravated situation with pollution concentration on surface waters of rivers and lakes, due to direct discharge that 55 Municipalities conduct on a daily basis. Industry on the other hand discharges it's waste water also in surface water bodies without a prior treatment (contaminating directly underground waters through the hydrogeological windows and through the buffer areas of existing wells).

Regarding the waste management, Albania's overall situation remains informal while more than 50 Municipalities are still incapable to deliver the service according to standards. Recycling, reduction, segregation and composting are not part of the treatment cycle. National Waste Strategy remains on hold for comments and reflection from other agencies and ministries. Lately, Albanian government took the initiative to regulate and reduce the amount of plastic bags. Decision No. 232, Date 26.04.2018 constricts that any plastic bag used in Albania should have a thickness less than 35-microns and 55% of its composition should come from recycled plastic. Nevertheless, impact on urban and rural pollution with single use plastics is disturbing and such measure didn't reflect a positive impact at large. The most important development for the waste sector is related to gov initiative to construct incinerators for Tirana and Fieri, while the public opinion is doubting the effect on air emissions of such initiatives.

On the other hand, public health is jeopardized due to 3 main factors, food security, air pollution and permanent exposure to high levels of noise pollution. Figures are not relevant for these topics due to lack of monitoring practices since 2015 but local and small initiatives indicate that PM2.5, PM10 are above the standard also pesticides and toxins is present in almost 78% of the food traded in large markets. The only adequate reference is used by ISHP<sup>ii</sup> where reports on hospitalized persons with respiratory problems is a increasing trend from 15 years now.

### 1.3. Summary of the Report

Republic of Albania initiated relationship with EU since 1992 when a mutual trade and Co-operation process was signed. Later in 1997 the EU Council of Ministers established bilateral relations for economic and political sectors.

In June 2006 SAA was signed initially between parties in Luxembourg and two years later the visa facilitation entered in force. Albania applied formally for membership in European Union on 28 April 2009. In June-July 2018 the EU Parliament extended the opening of negotiations with Albania due to justice, corruption, political interference in election process as the main concerns.

This report focuses on ENV.net targeted activities of Environment and Energy in Albania during 2018 (and do not cover other subchapters). Methodology used is as follows. For the starting point, we use EC Annual Report 2018, and some relevant official documents, like internal plans, strategies and annual reports from sectors.

For Chapter 27, we take in account NGOs activities and inputs from Civil Society on matters concerning environment and Energy.

## **2. Fundamentals**

### **2.1. Environmental Rights**

Environmental rights leading to more adaptive planning and protection is a crucial issue for all the democratic societies all around the world, especially for those new one which aim to join higher standards of economic development at the benefit of proper citizens and their rights. Given this context, the efforts made by both the Albanian legislator and the administrative power assume a particular importance considering the balance process between the right to economically develop and the right of the next (and present) generation to a healthy and sufficient environment. Therefore, we should underline that the new national strategy of environmental protection has neglected the effects of the latest economic and territorial reforms undertaken by the central government. Along with the legislative and administrative actions toward the improvement of the environment a new environmental culture dedicated to the young generations is also necessary. Herby we list the priorities to be taken into consideration for further development of the sector:

- Reinforcement of environmental legislation
- Environmental protection and responsibility to prevent and respond with compensation toward damages
- Establishing international cooperation and expanding best management practices
- Cooperation with EU

Both education and legislation constitute important pillars for Albanian society in order to strongly build its route towards the European Union and the way to democratic and developed society.

### **2.2. Environmental Accountability & Governance**

Albania's environmental law gradually consolidated and specified into its sub-divisions, where each of these laws and regulations belong to the main components or environmental issues. Therefore, now it can be considered an almost complete legislation committed to the conservation of biodiversity and its components. It includes the Law on Forests and Forest Protection, the Law on Fisheries and Aquatic Life, the Law on Seeds and Seedlings, the Law on Wildlife and hunting, Horticulture Protection Law, Law on Protected Areas, Law on Protection of Trans-Border Lakes, Forests and Pastures Law, Law on Protection of Nature Medical, Ether and Oil.

In addition, another group is made with laws that protect the environment from pollution and damages as the Law of Air Protection from Pollution, the Law on Environmental Treatment of Solid Waste, the Law on Public Dispose of Waste, the Law on Environmental Treatment of Wastewater, the Law on the regulatory Framework of Water Supply and Waste Destruction and Treatment of Water, and the Law on Chemical Compounds, etc.

Another special group, recently the most vulnerable due to latest changes consist of laws regulating the processes of environmental impact assessment and environmental permit issuing the environmental impact. Where environmental impact assessment and pubic information is limited for a large types of interventions.

### **2.3. Environmental Monitoring**

By far monitoring remains one of the most problematic issues in Albania. By law it is regulated that National Environmental Agency conducts monitoring practices throughout the country for all the environmental aspects. It is due to outdated technology and lab equipment's that monitoring practices lost credibility and status reports are no longer generated and reported.

### **2.4. Fight against crime to environment**

Environmental Crime is now under the jurisdiction of State Police force. Even-though that first reporter of such crimes should be Environmental Inspectorate from Ministry of Environment or National Environmental Agency, figures indicate a low responsibility on such matters whereas an intensive and well managed work has been conducted so fare from the Protected Areas Agencies on fighting deforestation, hunting and other irresponsible behavior within the protected areas.



### 3. Obligations of Membership

#### 3.1. Energy (Under Chapter 15)

##### 3.1.1. Security of Supply, Market, Hydropower

On security of supply and production, Albania remains at an early stage of preparation as the central institutions continue to intervene and buy large amount of energy stock. Often during the peak price period indicating that planning is a difficult process. About 3GW per year are imported from regional producer (ERE, 2016). To date there are around 500 hydropower plants in Albania, either operative/under construction or planned since 2005. Of these, 105 are located in protected areas. Such power plants have had a significant impact on the local biodiversity. Besides problems in production and supply, Albania has a huge problem in consumption as well, where public institutions and public lighting are not only major consumers, but have also a very low ability to pay the tariff. While, Albanian housing sector is responsible for consuming at least 47% of the total amount of electric energy produced on a yearly basis. A nation-wide energy audit/census regarding consumption behavior must be conducted in order to better orient internal policy and planning. This sector, even being among most strategic and priors, still bases its future development on assumptions rather than need and approximation with regional, European and world market trends.

There is important that a lot could be learned from the Albanian context, which indicates that focusing on the hydropower systems of energy production is not a sustainable solution in many terms, mainly in times where climate change is affecting directly water regime:

- The existing systems are compromised and inefficient and experience loss of energy;
- The use of water as a source of energy is clean, but the effect of the related infrastructure on the river and adjacent ecosystems is negative, with costs exceeding benefits, especially in a climate high-risk context;
- The private HPPs have little if not at all care for the ecosystem they make use of. Furthermore, the number of these plants is high and they are located/planned to be located in each and every single river and stream. Energy production as a profitable business is the driving force behind the private HPPs. On the other side, though the government has adopted an updated national energy plan, the latter does not embrace an integrated approach that covers all types of sources, considers cross-sectorial, territorial and environmental effects and takes into account the cross-border impacts.

In these circumstances, two problems are to be faced by the government and the society, in terms of the energy sector: 1) the decreasing quantity of energy supplied by the current system (water based); 2) the gap between demand and supply due to not using alternative energy sources to date.

The central stockholding body of Albania and Kosovo, whom ratified a common representation on the large market awaits activating. Albania's electricity system is interconnected with the neighbouring systems of Greece and Montenegro since 2014, when the European Network of Transmission System Operators approved synchronous operation of the Albanian electricity transmission system with the continental European system. The 400 kV interconnection line between Albania and Kosovo was finalized in June but still not used due to regional relationship with Serbian Government. This is affecting seriously energy behaviour of both countries as a major potential could be released with common panning of energy exchange between countries.

##### 3.1.2. Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Performance, Classification and Audit in Housing and Industry

The regulatory framework for renewable energy is currently piloted as in 2017 the law supporting integration of RES in Albania was approved. Moreover, the 'National Action Plan on Renewable Resources 2018-2020' (KM, 2018) was revised, taking into consideration obligations deriving from commitments undertaken since the Paris Agreement and increasing to 140MW the aimed installed capacity of RES by 2020. In both the Ministry and the Regulatory Authority there is no progress with increasing capacity to manage RES. There is an interest in the further development of hydropower and

support schemes are applied only to hydropower and not to other RES while during 2017 there were more than 35 official applications in Ministry of Energy by interested Albanian Entrepreneurs to invest on Solar Parks less than 2MWp installed capacity. Law No. 124/2015 “Energy Efficiency” (GoA, 2015) assigns EEAiii with responsibilities to ensure that objectives deriving from NEAP<sup>iv</sup> will be met and implemented accordingly. This law defines also the means, for instance revising of the construction code and enable energy audit and classification within 2018, as an official process that identifies and classifies the existing consumer stock in Albania.

Both processes, crucial for meeting the 6.8% overall energy saving for all sectors, but in reality central government and MIE are not supporting by all means the agency. Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (Directorate for Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency) is the key body in charge of energy efficiency matters but its capacity remains insufficient, while in 2017 the Agency for Energy Efficiency was established and awaiting to consolidate its final organigram still no allocated resources are available besides supports from foreign projects and development funds.

Energy efficiency measures, combined with enabled alternative energy sources, would support the government in achieving the commitment taken to reduce GHG emissions by 11.5%, compared to 2016 records, therefore reducing also its national footprint, as stated on the commitments deriving from the Paris Agreement in 2016 (IRENA, 2017). This commitment, seems difficult to be achieved, among others, due to the absence of a national GHG Register and basically because Environmental Permit Procedures, Construction Code and Planning Regulatory have not changed accordingly to this commitment. Furthermore, the absence of net-metering also lowers the possibility to achieve the GHG reduction commitment.

### **3.2. Environment (Under Chapter 27)**

#### *3.2.1. Water Quality and Management*

According to rivers water quality, only some physic-chemical parameters are periodically monitored, such as : dissolved oxygen, BOD<sub>5</sub> (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), pH, NH<sub>4</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, PO<sub>4</sub>, and total-P, at 37 monitoring stations. The quality of water in rivers basins is classified in five classes, such as : high, good, moderate, poor and bad. This classification is not in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

Biological assessment of river water quality for components, such as : benthic invertebrate fauna, phytoplankton, phytobenthic, macrophytes and fish, is not established frequently, making this water monitoring a challenge.

At the beginning of 2017, the Integrated Water Management National Strategy (IWMNS) was adopted for the period 2018-2027. One of objectives set up in Strategy is to ensure the equitable and sustainable use of water resources, but legal framework of the sub-legal acts of this issue, they are not yet transposed.

Also, IWMNS clearly defines the provision of water at good levels for the population. In Albania, population in rural areas is supplied with drinking water from individual wells or from natural water sources, without conducting any monitoring analysis of its quality.

While in urban areas the quality of drinking water is monitored at water source or reservoir (eg in the case of the city of Tirana and tourist area in Kavaja), the quality of which is not the same when reaches the customer, due to the outdated water supply system.

#### **- River Basin management**

In 2010, Mati Basin management plan was the first one adopted, but the implementation of it has not started yet. Regarding the management plans for Drini-Buna, as well as Seman and Shkumbin basin, these are in drafting phase.

According to the quality of rivers, only some physico-chemical parameters are routinely monitored, such as : dissolved oxygen, BOD<sub>5</sub> (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), pH, NH<sub>4</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, PO<sub>4</sub>, and total-P, at 37 monitoring stations. The quality of water in rivers basins is classified in five classes, such as : high,



good, moderate, poor and bad. This classification is not in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

Biological assessment of river water quality for components, such as : benthic invertebrate fauna, phytoplankton, phytobenthic, macrophytes and fish, is not established frequently, making this water monitoring a challenge.

Drafting the River Basin Management Plan will require a higher number of parameters and monitoring stations in each river basin. Conduction water monitoring analyses four times a year is not representative to understand dynamics of water quality.

#### **- Underground water quality**

The Albanian Geological Service (AGS) contracted by the National Environmental Agency (NEA), is responsible to conduct underground water analyses, in 59 monitoring station in all territory. The physico-chemical parameters monitored routinely by AGS are: pH, hardness, alkalinity, acidity, nitrate, nitrite, ammonia and salinity. Regarding to heavy metals it is not the same situation, the monitoring process is not carried out every year due to lack of funds.

The monitoring network according to groundwater is not representative due to the small number of monitoring stations in all the country, and it is not aligned with the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC).

#### **- Waste water and waste water treatment**

The management of water supply, sewerage and waste infrastructure has always been a problem in Albania and has yet to be solved, although constituting an urgent environmental issue for the country. As a result, the Government of Albania based on the proposal of Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, decided to establish a dedicated agency to deal with this issue, namely: The National Agency of Water Supply, Sewage and Waste Infrastructure. Through its legal and technical authority, it will coordinate and monitor all sectorial activities in cooperation with all institutions of the country at central and local level. As well as, it will coordinate and cooperate with state and international financial institutions for the implementation of public services strategies and plans the capacity building needs.

In regards to the document of World Bank, on 'Albania Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Financing Strategy', only 63% of the population living and working in urban areas are covered by sewage system. There is a considerable difference between urban and rural areas, because the coverage with sewage system in rural areas is almost negligible, only 6% of the population is provided this service.

Until 2017, in Albania were constructed 12 wastewater treatment plants, which serve the population in urban areas. So far, no plant has been constructed to treat wastewater in rural areas. During 2018, none of the 61 municipalities received funds for the construction of wastewater treatment plants. Concerning to the Directive 91/271/EEC On Urban Waste Water Treatment, there is no new development for its transposition.

### *3.2.2. Climate Change*

Albania, as a country with a high degree of expected negative impacts from climate change, is still at an early stage in its adoption of prevention, mitigation, and adaptation measures, both at a legal and political decision-making level.

In 1998, the Ministry of Environment established the Sector for Air and Climate Change to deal with these topics, but in 2017 the Ministry of Environment was reorganized. Therefore, the department within the ministry dedicated to climate change was dissolved, endangering the Convention on Climate Change and the credibility of reported data. Until 2017, the directorate used to report data related to greenhouse gas reduction and adaptation to climate, but nowadays different institutions do that without coordinating between each other.

In 2016, Albania ratified the Paris Agreement, and since then, the government has been working on a draft law On climate change which, and after being approved, will have as its main goal the fulfilment of

the tasks of Albania towards the Paris Agreement. Representatives from national, academic and civil society institutions have given their contribution to ensure compliance of Paris Agreement objectives.

First of all, Albanian Government has to adopt the Law on Climate Change and after that it still needs to develop and adopt a national strategy on climate change in line with the EU framework.

Thereafter, the structure responsible for the design and implementation of the *National Determination Contribution* and the *Appropriate Mitigation Measures for the Country* should be determined. Though not clearly defined in the draft law, the structure responsible for the monitoring process (The Directory for Environmental Status and Quality), should equally be charged with implementing the *National Determination Contribution* and the *Appropriate Mitigation Measures for the Country*.

### 3.2.3. Air Quality

The national air quality strategy adopted in 2014 continues to be the key legitimate document for the protection of air quality. This document has not been implemented in almost any of the relevant sectors. Monitoring of air quality is carried out in the main cities of the country (*Tiranë, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër, Vlorë, Fier, Sarandë dhe Korçë, Berat dhe Gjirokastrë*), with 121 points in total. For all monitored cities, there is not enough coverage on monitoring areas so the results could not reach credible statistics. Monitoring does not completely meet European Union standards, as there are low coverage of monitored areas, and on-time data is not generated.

The environmental status report for 2017 for air quality is not representative, given the limited number of monitoring stations and the short period of time monitored for each monitoring point.

So far there is no local action plan for the protection of air quality and reduction within standards of all components, and there are not official map shows the polluted areas in cities.

Recently, Government of Albanian has adopted a decision which prohibits importation of cars older than ten years. This innovator thinks to reduce the emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere, but the quality of the fuel in the country does not meet the European standards.

Industrial emissions in the air are not well known, there are no public statistics on the amount of pollutant discharged in the atmosphere from industrial sites in the country. The construction sector has intensified their activities in main cities of the country, such as: Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, etc. The concentration of particles in urban air has been increased considerably.

The lack of reliable and periodic statistics remains an insecure problem in the country, making it difficult to take effective measures to reduce air pollution. Currently, civil society organizations will generate alternate air quality data in some of the largest cities in the country for three years, enabling a clear picture of air quality in their territories.

Scientific and academic bodies also CSO representatives, have unanimously supported Green Lungs alternative initiative to monitor noise pollution and have offered their support to such project implemented by EU Delegation support in Albania. Preliminary data for piloted area of Tirana City center indicates that the daily average of urban air pollution is exceeding standards regarding the PM2.5 and PM10.

### 3.2.4. Noise and Light Pollution

During 2017, noise monitoring was carried out in 10 cities such as Tiana, Saranda, Vlora, Fier, Shkodra, Korça, Berat, Gjirokastra, Kukës and Pogradec, where the last three cities have been added for the first time in noise monitoring program. The number of monitoring stations has been increased, from 37 stations in 2016, to 43 in 2017.

The National Action Plan for Noise Management 2011 (NAPNM) paves the way for the development of local action plans and the preparation of local and national noise maps. But until now there is no initiative by any local government that has drafted these plans. According the legal framework, local action plan should aim to analyze the situation in each municipality, draft a program of measures to decrease noise levels, also there should be define quiet areas in an open or populated territory. Following this, at the beginning of 2018, guideline no.1, dated 19.2.2018 “On approval of minimum requirements for developing local action plan” was approved. Until now, there is no progress on implementing local action plans and statistics on health effects of noise..

State institutions such as Public Health Institute are eager to receive monitoring data regarding noise pollution in order to determine public health implications at large. Such studies that should be followed with concrete interventions are missing from 5 years now.

Scientific and academic bodies have unanimously supported Green Lungs alternative initiative to monitor noise pollution and have offered their support to such project implemented by EU Delegation support in Albania. Preliminary data for piloted area of Tirana City center indicates that the daily average of urban noise is 62dB(A) during day time exceeding the standard by 7dB(A) as for the night time the registered average is 60.4DbA exceeding the standard by 15.4dB(A).

### 3.2.5. *Waste Management*

Recent developments in the waste management sector have been focused on the implementation of sub legal acts and on the improvement of strategic documents. Currently, the National Waste Management Strategy 2018-2033 has been drafted, a document which is a review of the 2010 Strategy. The main purpose of Strategy is to update policies and the National Plan for Integrated Waste Management, as well as to re-evaluate country framework to fulfill the obligations of membership in European Union. The draft strategy aims to establish a minimum standard on waste management in the country's territory and establish a unified methodology to evaluate the costs of providing the integrated waste management service. The adoption of the National Integrated Waste Management Strategy and its implementation is assessed as a key step in improving the waste management situation in the country.

In terms of improving the waste management generation situation, in April 2018, the Government has decided by the DCM (DCM 232/2018) to amend the Decision no. 10 463/2012 "On their packaging and wastes". In addition, the decision consists in reducing plastic in products packaging, and stopping the production and importation of plastic bags that are not biodegradable.

In terms of improving waste disposal sites, the Council of Ministers has approved the Decision no. 389, dated 27.6.2018 "On some amendments and additions to Decision no. 452, dated July 11, 2012, of the Council of Ministers, "On waste landfill". The changes made contain in the closure of illegal landfills, together with those that are legal but do not meet the sanitary conditions until December 2018. Within this period, all the municipalities should submit rehabilitation plans for these landfills. So far, very few (Durrës, Puka, Dibra, etc.) municipalities have made efforts to rehabilitate these landfills, while the number of landfills that does not meet the standards set out reaches 80 and illegal dumps over 300 such.

DCM no. 319/2018 "On the adoption of measures for integrated waste management costs" is an important step to unify the methodology used by local government to calculate costs and service fee. The implementation of the methodology requires capacity building in local government.

In general, the situation of integrated waste management in the country appears to be extremely problematic. Currently, about 69% of the population receives waste management services, only 30% of waste is dispatched to the landfill (3 sanitary landfills in the country), while rest are disposed on inadequate deposit sites. Recycling companies in the country have reduced processing capacities, in 2017 they provide about 38 companies, recycling 17% of the total amount of waste, and it is now somewhat unclear their number and processing capacity.

The Albanian Government, unlike the waste hierarchy set out in the National Strategy, is leading policies towards waste incineration, bypassing other very important steps of integrated urban waste management (Reduction, Reuse and Recycling). Currently, 2 incinerators are in construction in Municipalities of Tirana and Fier, while the Municipality of Elbasan has completed the construction of it, with an incineration capacity of 470 000 T/year, while the amount of waste incinerated is estimated at 122,944 t / year.

While industrial waste management in the country is weak, it is accompanied by a lack of investment and poor enforcement of the law.

### 3.2.6. *Wildlife and Nature Protection*

The National Strategy of Biodiversity Policy approved in 2015 is the main document that guides the way to sustainable development of biodiversity. Currently, Albania has banned hunting of wildlife and wild

birds in the country by 2021. The hunting ban has given results to the increase of wild fauna in the country, and occasionally reported cases of illegal hunting, even murder of endangered animals.

The inventory of fauna and flora has not been carried out for years, as there is a significant lack of biodiversity management activities in the country.

The Albanian Government has forbidden the use of forests from special law by 2016 until 2026. This law has not been fully implemented, as the country continues intensifying the use of forests, turning into one of the main environmental issues in the country.

In 2014, the law on protected areas was amended. Law no. 81/2017 "On Protected Areas", has emphasized the planning and development of protected areas. In this regard, the law has left room for various interpretations, making the protected areas more likely to be affected by the possible developments in them. By changing the law, precisely in the most important protected areas in the country, foreign investors asked the government to allow for the construction of tourist resorts inside protected areas, namely in the Divjaka - Karavasta National Park and in the Vjosa Protected Landscape - Yet, these claims are still under consideration by the authorities in the country. The construction of hydropower plants in protected areas has had a major negative impact on biodiversity and the protection of protected areas in the country.

The Agency of Protected Areas, the main institution for the management of protected areas, although doing a good job in the function of controlling and managing protected areas, has a significant lack of human resources and low financial budget for carrying out of its functions.

In October 2018, with DCM no. 593, the composition, functioning and determination of the responsibilities of the committees of the protected environmental zones was determined. The Protected Area Committee is expected to have a positive impact in terms of surveillance of the protected areas in the country.

## 4. References / Bibliography

### Bibliography

- AKPT. (2015). *Plani Pergjithshem Kombetar - Dokumenti i pare kombetar per planifikimin e territorit 2015 -2030*. Tirane: Agjencia Kombetare e Planifikimit te Territorit.
- AKPT. (2016). *Plani Integruar Ndersektorial per Bregdetin*. Ministria Infrastruktures dhe Energjise. Tirane: Agjencia Kombetare e Planifikimit te Territorit. Retrieved June 8, 2018, from AKPT: <http://planifikimi.gov.al/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=2752&token=b41d3b4552272882361440529e2604b12fe5ca57>
- ERE. (2016). *Albania Yearly Report, Energy Production*. Koorporata Elektro Energjitike e Shqiperise, Enti Rregullator i Energjise. Tirane: Enti Rregullator i Energjise. Retrieved May 25, 2018, from [http://ere.gov.al/doc/Raporti\\_Vjetor\\_2016.pdf](http://ere.gov.al/doc/Raporti_Vjetor_2016.pdf)
- European Commision. (2018). *Communication on EU enlargement Policy*. Brussels: European Commision.
- European Environmental Agency. (2017). *Albanian bathing water quality*. Brussels: European Union. Retrieved October 15, 2018, from <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/assessments/state-of-bathing-water/country-reports-2017-bathing-season/albania-2017-bathing-water-report/view>
- GoA. (2015, 10). *QPZ.al*. Retrieved July 8, 2018, from Qendra e Publikimeve Zyrtare / Fletore zyrtare: <http://oshee.al/ligji-nr-1242015-per-eficencen-e-energji>
- IRENA. (2017). *Cost Competitive renewable power generation: Potential across South East Europe*. JOANNUM RESEARCH. University of Ljubjana / Faculty of Electrical Engineering. International Renewable Energy Agency. Retrieved June 16, 2018, from [https://balkangreenenergynews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/IRENA\\_Cost-competitive\\_power\\_potential\\_SEE\\_2017.pdf](https://balkangreenenergynews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/IRENA_Cost-competitive_power_potential_SEE_2017.pdf)
- KM. (2018). *Vendim Nr.179 date 28.03.2018 "Per Miratimin e Planit Kombetar te Veprimit per Burimet e Rinovueshme te Energjise 2018-2020"*. Kryeministria / Ministria Infrastruktures dhe Energjise. , Drejtoria e Burimeve te Rinovueshme. Tirane: Qendra Botimeve Zyrtare. Gjetur në <http://www.qbz.gov.al/Botime/Akteindividuale/Janar%202018/Fletore%2045/VKM%20nr.%20179,%20date%2028.3.2018.pdf>

---

<sup>i</sup> National Environmental A

<sup>ii</sup> Institute of Public Health

<sup>iii</sup> Energy Efficiency Agency for Albania

<sup>iv</sup> National Energy Action Plan