



GOVERNANCE

Three countries, one future



THREE COUNTRIES, TWO LAKES, ONE FUTURE

ΤΡΕΙΣ ΧΩΡΕΣ, ΔΥΟ ΛΙΜΝΕΣ, ΕΝΑ ΜΕΛΛΟΝ

ТРИ ДРЖАВИ, ДВЕ ЕЗЕРА, ЕДНА ИДНИНА

TRE VENDE, DY LIQENE, NJË E ARDHME



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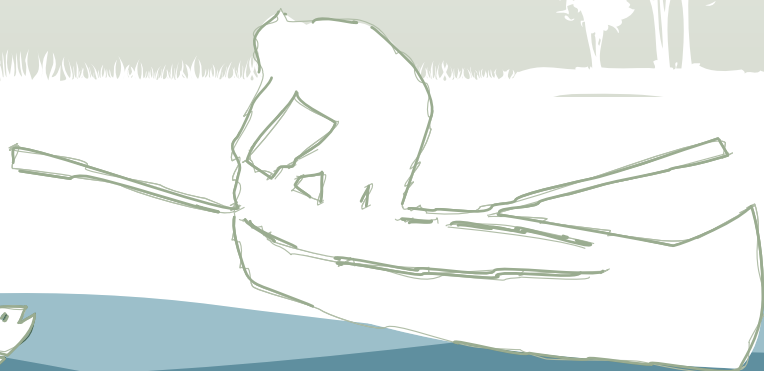
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Our **VISION** is Prespa lakes basin managed jointly by the three countries, for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and the wellbeing of its peoples.

Our **MISSION** is to offer ways to restore and keep this balance.

Prespa Park Coordination Committee





Over the last two decades the global number of transboundary protected areas (TBPA) has gradually increased from 59 in 1980s, to around 200, covering a total of 4,6 millions hectares on all five continents.

Photo by Nehru Suleyman



Three countries, one future

Established in 2000, the trilateral Prespa Park is the first transboundary protected area in the Balkans, preserving fragile ecosystems and tending to the wellbeing of its inhabitants.

Comprising of two lakes and their surroundings in Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece, the Prespa Park sets an example for neighbourly cooperation for the protection of biodiversity and of natural and cultural resources. However, it still has

a way to go until it reaches full institutional maturation and – consequently – increased efficiency in managing sustainable development in the Prespa Lakes Basin.

There is no recipe for this: Although transboundary protected areas (TBPA) are the global trend in efforts to protect the planet's natural resources, the forms in which states choose to cooperate to achieve this vary. This process is often

View from Galica
over Stenje Bay
Photo UNDP archives

complicated by differing political, institutional and socio-economic circumstances in different states. The most common first step in planning a transboundary protected area is starting talks between governments that eventually lead to the signing of a binding “TBPA Agreement”, with enforceable provisions.



Duty to Cooperate

Whichever the form that suits best the involved parties, it is based on their obligation to cooperate for the protection of the environment, stemming from the International Law. All three countries have ratified most of the international treaties relevant for the protection of Prespa Lakes Basin biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural heritage:

YEAR	TREATY	SIGNATORIES
1971	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	All three
1973	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES)	FYR of Macedonia / Greece
1979	Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	All three
1983	Bonn Convention on the Protection of Species of Wild Animals (CMS)	All three
1985	Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe	FYR of Macedonia / Greece
1991	Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context	All three
1992	ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	Albania / Greece
1992	UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	All three



In addition to that, a special role is played by the European Union (EU) policies, since Greece is member country, and Albania and FYR of Macedonia are aspiring members in the process of adjusting their legal systems to *Aquis Communautaire*. The relevant EU Directives are:

- Directive 79/409/EEC on the protection of birds;
- Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats

and wild flora and fauna (Habitats/ NATURA 2000 Directive); and

- Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive).

National Park signpost

Photo by Nehru Suleyman



Rainbow over the Prespa Lakes Basin

Photo by Alvin Lopez / UNDP

Skies over Prespa Lake

Photo UNDP archives





View of Macro Prespa from inside the cave of Panayia Eleoussa hermitage, near Psarades village, Greece
Photo by Ardit Konomi/UNDP

Towards the Prespa Park

Pelister National Park (FYR of Macedonia) is the oldest protected area in the basin, proclaimed in 1948 to protect some 10,000 ha of mountainous ecosystems, including the primary habitat of the *Pinus peuce*, known as Macedonian Pine or Balkan Pine. In 1958 **Galicica National Park** was proclaimed to protect 25,000 ha of woodland and the exceptionally rich biodiversity. The country's part of Macro Prespa has been designated a **Monument of Nature** in 1977.

Prespa National Forest (PNF) in Greece was designated in 1974 covering 19,470 ha, including Micro Prespa Lake and a Wildlife Refuge - Sfika. In 1975 it was declared a **Landscape of exceptional beauty**, and designated a **Wetland of International Importance** under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The efforts to protect natural habitats pick up in the 1990s: Strictly Protected Ornithological Reserve **Ezerani** together with the rest of the FYR of Macedo-



A village by Macro Prespa
Photo by Nehru Suleyman



nian part of Prespa lake have been designated a Ramsar site, i.e. a **Wetland of International Importance** in 1995. In Albania, **Prespa National Park** was established in 1999.

Under the EEC/EU policies the whole catchment basin on the Greek side has been included in the **Europe-wide network of protected areas - NATURA 2000**.

In 1999 the Greek Society for the Protection of Prespa was honoured with the Ramsar Convention Award for its pioneer conservation work in Micro Prespa.

The establishment of a Trans-boundary Protected Area provides a way to effectively coordinate management over a whole region. It also decreases the possibility that a positive measure on one side will be cancelled out by inaction or a destructive or unsustainable activity on the other side. A typical example of this is the preservation and management of the lakes water's quality and quantity, and fauna that cross state boundaries. Joint research and monitoring programmes eliminate duplication, standardise methodologies, and share expensive equipment. Basin-wide monitoring, in par-

ticular, acquires extremely high added value.

Decades-long efforts to draw attention to the need for the protection of Prespa was crowned on the World Wetlands Day, February 2, 2000, when the three Prime Ministers jointly signed the Prespa Park Declaration.



Prime Ministers I. Meta, Lj. Georgievski and C. Simitis of Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece respectively after signing the Prespa Declaration in Aghios Germanos, February 2, 2000



Saray, a beautiful French-style castle in Resen built in the early 20th century by Ahmed Nyazi Bey

With it, they also issued a wide mandate for "enhanced co-operation among competent authorities in our countries with regard to environmental matters", and especially consideration of joint actions.



11th Prespa Park Coordination Committee Meeting, Nov 2008, Pyli, Greece
Photo by Prespa National Forest Management Body (PNFMB)

Prespa Park Coordination Committee

The Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC) is a ten-member body representing governments, local authorities and environmental non-governmental organisations from the three countries, and one ex-officio member from Ramsar/MedWet. The work of the PPCC is supported by its Secretariat, seated in Aghios Germanos, Greece. The PPCC ensures stakeholder

participation in the planning of joint activities in the area.

One of its main early accomplishments was the completion of the Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park, a strategic

document which lays down a joint vision for the transboundary basin, identifies the main management issues and aims to guide future activities for the region. The PPCC has initiated and overviews the progress of several transboundary initiatives,

As stated in the Declaration on the Creation of the Prespa Park and the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Lakes and their Surroundings, the goals of the trilateral cooperation are to:

- “a) maintain and protect the unique ecological values of the ‘Prespa Park’;
- “b) prevent and/or reverse the causes of its habitat degradation,
- “c) explore appropriate management methods for the sustainable use of the Prespa Lakes water,
- “d) to spare no efforts so that the ‘Prespa Park’ becomes and remains a model of its kind as well as an additional reference to the peaceful collaboration among our countries”.



including the development of a Transboundary Monitoring System and the establishment of a Transboundary Water Management Working Group.

Macro Prespa

Photo UNDP archives



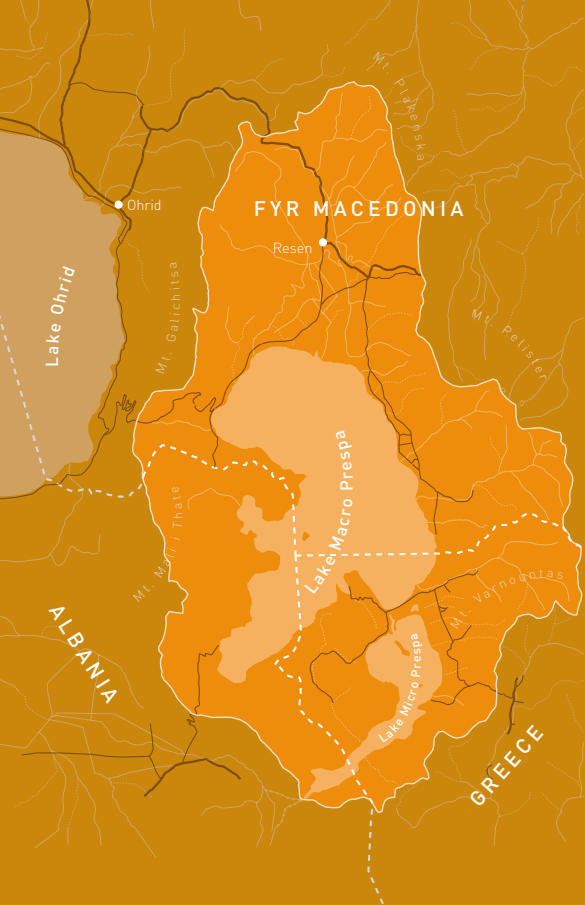
Forests in winter by Micro Prespa, Greece

Photo by Aleksandar Blazeski





Photo by Ardit Konomi/UNDP



Prespa Park boundaries

Adapted, courtesy of the Society
for the Protection of Prespa

The Prespa Lakes basin (Southeast Europe) is a globally significant ecological and cultural landscape comprising four National Parks and several protected areas with unique habitats, flora and fauna.

In 2000 the Governments of Albania, FYR Macedonia and Greece agreed to work together to maintain the natural values of the area and introduce environmental management practices in the Prespa Park by integrating ecological, economic and social goals.

Two Wetlands of International Importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, lie within the Transboundary Prespa Park boundaries. The area has been acknowledged as a Gift to the Earth by WWF-International, and European Union has included Prespa Lakes in its policies on water and species protection.

The Prespa Park Coordination Committee is a trilateral body representing governments, local authorities and civil society. It supports environmental protection and sustainable development in the Prespa Park for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and the wellbeing of its peoples.

Since 2006 a GEF/UNDP Project supports Integrated Ecosystem Management in the transboundary Prespa Lakes Basin, to last until 2011.



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