

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM)**

**pursuant to art. 14 of the Agreement**

**31 January 2023, via teleconference**

### **Summary Minutes**

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At the invitation of the WGWM's Chair, Ms Maria Gkini, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) held its second regular meeting, via teleconference, on 31 January 2023. The meeting was technically supported with funding provided by the Green Fund within the programme "Natural environment and innovative activities 2022" and managed by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) through its Management Unit of Prespes National Park and Protected Areas of Western Macedonia, Greece, (MU-PNPPAWM).

Representatives of: (i) the Water Resources Management Agency (AMBU) from Albania; (ii) the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) and the Municipality of Resen from North Macedonia; (iii) the Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN) and the Decentralised Administration of Epirus - Western Macedonia from Greece and (iv) the European Commission, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia, participated at the meeting. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC) and by several officers and consultants of state services from Greece as observers (see Annex I: List of Participants).

#### **Agenda item 1: Opening session**

The Chair welcomed the participants to the virtual meeting, reminded them of key decisions taken during the previous first regular meeting held in person last June in Pyli, Greece, and highlighted the main issues to be discussed at this second meeting, namely the proposed road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area and the proposed amendment of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WGWM.

The agenda of the meeting was then presented and unanimously approved.

#### **Agenda item 2: Road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area**

Mr Spyros Tasoglou, on behalf of the Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, presented the draft road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area, which was sent, on 15 December 2022, via the PPMC Secretariat, to the WGWM members for review and comments. The road map includes 2 sets of actions, referred to as Objectives: Objective 1 actions (1st - 8th month starting from the approval of the road map) with a view to exchanging of necessary data and information and Objective 2 actions (summer 2023 – 2025) aiming to the development of a common River

Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Prespa Lakes River Basin. Taking into consideration that the Objective 2 actions are significantly dependent on the availability of information and data to be exchanged, an updated road map focusing primarily on Objective 2 can be submitted to the 4<sup>th</sup> WGWM meeting, on the basis of the progress and results of Objective 1 actions.

A Task Group, consisting of experts by the 3 State Parties to the Agreement, was proposed to be established and operate for the implementation of most actions of the road map. The Parties were kindly urged to nominate their respective expert/s to the Task Group and communicate their nominations to the WGWM Chair and the PPMC Secretariat, by the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. It was stressed that the experts nominated to the Task Group should be able to act as focal points on behalf of their respective administrations, have access to all kind of necessary information available in each country, and be responsible for communication and collaboration with all involved authorities and institutions at national and regional level.

Greece (Ministry of Environment and Energy) expressed its willingness to take the lead in the Task Group during the implementation process of Objective 1 actions.

The representative of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) of North Macedonia, Mr Ylber Mirta, expressed full agreement with the need to establish the proposed Task Group and the need to exchange data, and asked for clarifications concerning the possible necessity to develop Terms of Reference for the operation of the proposed Task Group as well as the number of experts who could be nominated by each Party.

The representative of the European Commission, Mr Davide Bixio, stressed that the road map provides very clear expectations and a realistic schedule, especially for Objective 1 actions. The work plan for Objective 1 actions is very important for the effective implementation of the overall road map, such as the design of a coherent monitoring program. He suggested that the proposed timeframe of Objective 2 actions should be reviewed in the next meeting of WGWM, on the basis of the results of Objective 1 actions. He added that the objective 1 work will be valuable for the EU for Prespa project that is about to start. Finally, he thanked Greece for the offer to lead the Task Group during the implementation of the crucial Objective 1 actions.

Ms Lupka Dimovska Zajkov, from the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) of North Macedonia, expressed concern regarding the availability of possible data expected to be collected and shared through the Task Group, mentioning that as all Parties have experience in collecting and submitting data on water to the European Environment Agency (EEA). The Task Group could start with a similar and simple format for collecting data until the platform for exchange of information in the PPMC website is operational.

The road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park Area (road map for cooperation on water resources management in Prespa Lakes River Basin) was unanimously adopted by the members of the WGWM and is attached as Annex II.

With regard to the question on the need to elaborate and agree on Terms of Reference for the operation of the Task Group, the Chair and the representative of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece both suggested that as there is a need to launch practical work as soon as possible, this should not be necessary. The suggested ground rules for the operation of the Task Group are already included in the presentation of the road map and are open to comments and suggestions by the Parties, while basic elements, particularly for the role of the nominated experts to the Task Group, were going to be highlighted in the summary minutes of the meeting. With regard to the number of experts to be nominated by each Party to the Task Group, it was stressed that it should be kept as small as possible (i.e. two to maximum three) to ensure efficiency of the Group.

With regard to the format to be used for collecting data and information, it was suggested that this should better be discussed by the Task Group itself, aiming to keep it as simple as possible and starting from the collection and sharing of data already and commonly available to the three riparian states. For example, data and information submitted to the EEA by each Party will be taken into account, including the format that was used, in order to avoid any duplication of work.

The WGWM accepted the offer by Greece to take the lead in the Task Group during the implementation process of Objective 1 actions.

### **Agenda item 3: Amendment of ToR of the WGWM**

Ms Maria Gkini presented the proposed amendments of the ToR of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM).

She reminded participants that the ToR for the WGWM approved by the PPMC in Pyli, in June last year were in line with the provisions of article 15, paragraph 5 of the Agreement, stipulating that “The operational costs of the Working Group on Water Management (participation in and organisation of meetings) shall be covered for a period of four years after the entry into force of this Agreement, by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment”. However, during the discussions in June, the Members of the WGWM proposed and agreed that the meetings of the WGWM should follow the annual rotation of the venue of the PPMC meetings and that the WGWM meetings should be held back-to-back with the PPMC meetings. Taking into account this strong suggestion by the Parties, the proposed amended ToR accordingly introduce changes in Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 3 and Article 5, paragraph 1. With these changes, the Party responsible to chair the PPMC and organize its meetings, will also be responsible to organize and bear associated costs of the WGWM back-to-back meetings. The ToR were also proposed to be amended with a proposed addition of a sentence providing for the drafting of all working documents of the WGWM in English. A consequent related editorial deletion was also introduced to the latter part of paragraph 2 of Article 5 of the PPMC ToR.

The amended ToR of the WGWM, which were approved by all Parties, are attached in Annex III.

### **Agenda item 4: Any other matter and closure of the meeting**

The Chair wrapped up the meeting stressing again the main conclusions from the discussions held under each Agenda item, as presented in detail above, including:

1. The road map for the implementation of joint priorities for water management in the Prespa Park area was unanimously adopted by the WG members.
2. A Task Group, comprising experts of the 3 countries, will operate for the implementation of the actions included in the road map.
3. The Parties are kindly urged to nominate the expert or experts of the Task Group and communicate the nominations to the WGWM Chair and the PPMC Secretariat, until the 10<sup>th</sup> of February.
4. The expert/-s of the Task Group must have access to all kind of necessary information available in each country and be responsible for communication and collaboration with involved authorities and institutions. The availability and circulation of all necessary information and data within the Task Group must of course be ensured.
5. The WGWM accepted the offer by Greece to take the lead in the Task Group during the implementation process of Objective 1 actions, concerning the information and data exchange and the identification of data gaps.
6. An updated road map, focusing primarily on the Objective 2 actions, may be submitted to the 4th WGWM meeting.
7. The WGWM unanimously approved the proposed amendments to its ToR.

She further informed the Group that, according to the provisions of the WGWM ToR, the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will be submitted to the Members by the 15<sup>th</sup> of February.

It was reaffirmed that the next WGMW meeting will take place in the Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia, in June 2023.

The Chair thanked all WGWM members and invited observers for their contribution and declared the meeting closed.

## **Annex I**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM)**

**31 January 2023, via teleconference**

#### **List of participants**

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##### **WGWM Members**

1. Ermela Kraja, Water Resources Management Agency (AMBU), Albania (ermela.kraja@ambu.gov.al)
2. Maria Gkini, Chair of the WGWM, Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece (ginimaria3@gmail.com)
3. Spyros Tasoglou Directorate for Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece (s.tasoglou@prv.ypeka.gr)
4. Elpida Grigoriadou, Unit for the Monitoring and Protection of Water Resources, Decentralised Administration of Epirus-West Macedonia (grig.elpida@gmail.com)
5. Ylber Mirta, Department for Water, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (ymirta@gmail.com)
6. Ljupka Zajkov Department for Water, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (dljupka@gmail.com)
7. Zoran Kiprevski, Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia (sekretar@resen.gov.mk)
8. Ajman Al Mala Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia (ajman.almalla@resen.gov.mk)
9. Davide Bixio, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia (davide.bixio@eeas.europa.eu)

##### **Observers (in alphabetical order)**

1. Paschalis Anastasiou, Greek Embassy at Tirana, Greece
2. Stella Banou, Technical Consultant of 3rd RBMP Environmental Engineer, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
3. Liza Bensasson, Consultant for the 2nd revision of the RBMP, Water Directorate of West Macedonia, Greece
4. Robertina Brajanoska, Executive Director MES BirdLife in North Macedonia, North Macedonia
5. Elias Dimitriou, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece
6. Konstantinos Dimopoulos, Director General of Environmental Policy, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
7. Ioulia Drouga, Architect/Urbanist, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece

8. Julia Henderson, Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
9. Michail Kagkas, Economist - Administrative staff, NECCA, Greece
10. Alexandra Karpodini, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
11. Pali Kolefski, Mayor of Pustec Municipality, Albania
12. Maja Kotevska, PPMC Secretariat, Municipality of Resen, North Macedonia
13. Irene Koutseri, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
14. Spyridoula Liakou, Head of Directorate for the Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
15. Myrsini Malakou, Managing Director, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
16. Nikolaos Mavrakis. Dpt of European and International Environmental Issues, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
17. Theodora Notidou, Head of Environment, Culture and Sports, Ministry of the Interior (Sector of Macedonia and Thrace), Greece
18. Aspasia Papadopoulou, B4 Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
19. Lito Papadopoulou, Head of Management Unit of Prespa National Park and Protected Areas of Western Macedonia, Greece
20. Dimitrios Papageorgiou, Communications Coordinator, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
21. Maria Papaioannou National Expert EU and International Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece
22. Dimitris Psiachas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
23. Ioannis Rigas, Expert Counsellor on Environmental Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
24. Vivi Roumeliotou, PPMC Secretariat, Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece
25. Orfeas Roussos, ARSINOE External Contractor, Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency, Greece
26. Spase Shumka, PPNEA, Albania
27. Vasiliki Tsiaoussi, Head of Department "Biodiversity and Protected Areas", Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre, Greece
28. Tassos Varveris, Technical Consultant, Water Directorate of Western Macedonia, Greece
29. Alexandros Vidouris, Consul General, General Consulate of Greece in Bitola, Greece
30. Anna Voziou, First Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
31. Vasilis Zorapas, EAGME, Greece

## Annex II

### ROAD MAP FOR COOPERATION ON WATER REOURCES MANAGEMENT IN PRESPA LAKES RIVER BASIN

(in accordance to the summary minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Water Management)

Objective 1: Exchange of data collected and information						
Action	Description of action	Timeframe (months – after the approval of the road map)	Responsible actors	Method of implementation	Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding	Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*
1.1	List and contact details of competent authorities within each country, in relation or relevant to any aspect of water resources management, including: the core responsibilities of each competent authority and the legislation establishing the competent authority and laying down its duties. Register of all relevant legislation within each country concerning all aspects of water resources management.	1 & 2	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1
1.2	Exchange of information on existing operational or surveillance monitoring programmes: number of monitoring stations, co-ordinates, quality elements/parameters monitored, monitoring type and frequency.	1 & 2	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1
1.3	Exchange of surface and ground waters monitoring results: biological, hydromorphological, physico-chemical, chemical, quantitative data.	1 - 6	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1
1.4	Exchange of data and information concerning the identified pressures and their impacts in Prespa River Basin, including: point sources (UWWT plants, industrial plants, waste disposal sites, other relevant point sources), diffuse sources (agricultural activities, fertilizer and pesticide use, live stock, effluent in areas without sewerage networks, urban land use, other diffuse sources), water abstraction (for irrigation, for public water supply, abstractions by industry, other major abstractions), water flow regulations and morphological alterations of surface water (water supply reservoirs,	1 - 6	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1, 4, 6

Objective 1: Exchange of data collected and information						
Action	Description of action	Timeframe (months – after the approval of the road map)	Responsible actors	Method of implementation	Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding	Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*
	flood defense dams, dykes and channels, etc.), river management (physical alterations, engineering activities, agricultural enhancement, land infrastructure e.g. road/bridge construction, etc.), other morphological alterations including barriers, flood plains, artificial recharge of groundwater, or any other pressures not covered above.					
1.5	Exchange of economic data and information: list of water services in the international River Basin, volumes abstracted/discharged per water service, costs of water services (in €), level of cost recovery in % per water service, water prices per water service in € per m <sup>3</sup> . List of uncertainties and data gaps.	1 - 6	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1
1.6	Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation in the River Basin for the protection and restoration of the surface and ground waters status and their association with identified pressures, and evaluation of their effectiveness.	1 - 4	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	1, 8
1.7	Inventory of gaps identified concerning the availability of necessary data and proposals for future actions.	7 & 8	Working Group on Water Management (WGWM)	Evaluation of identified gaps and proposals for further actions	No extra cost foreseen	1
1.8	Creation of a platform for exchange of information in the PPMC website.	See PPMC work plan				2

<b>Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible actors</b>	<b>Method of implementation</b>	<b>Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding</b>	<b>Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*</b>
2.1	Consultation of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> River Basin Management Plan of Western Macedonia RBD (EL09), as regards the Prespa Lakes River Basin, with the involved authorities and interested parties of North Macedonia and Albania.	Summer 2023	General Directorate of Water of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment & Energy and Water Directorate of Western Macedonia (EL09)	Consultation meetings and electronic mail with timeframe for feedbacks	No extra cost	7
2.2	Delineation of transboundary River Basin of Prespa Lakes and assignment of surface and groundwater bodies to the River Basin. Coordination of typology of surface water bodies.	June 2023	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	7
2.3	Characterisation of groundwater bodies: geological and hydrogeological characteristics, character of the overlying strata, associated surface systems, etc.	October 2023	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	Depending on the availability of relevant information and background work in each country	7
2.4	Register of the water-related protected areas lying within the international River Basin: areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption, areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species, water bodies designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters, nutrient-sensitive areas, areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant Natura 2000 sites, and any	June 2023	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen	7

<b>Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible actors</b>	<b>Method of implementation</b>	<b>Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding</b>	<b>Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*</b>
	other protected areas defined under national legislation					
2.5	Designation of Heavily Modified (HMWB) and Artificial (AWB) water bodies.	October 2023	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost foreseen, depending on the relevant background work in each country	7
2.6	Analysis of anthropogenic pressures, including point sources, diffuse sources, water abstraction, water flow regulations, morphological alterations of surface water, river management, or any other pressures. Assessment of their impacts in a harmonised way.	End of 2023	National authorities from each country	Study	Depending on the availability of relevant information and data in each country	4,7
2.7	Preparation of a Water Balance Study for Prespa Lakes.	Spring 2024	National authorities from each country	Study	To be determined	7, 10
2.8	Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa.	Spring 2024	National authorities from each country	Study	To be determined	4, 5, 7
2.9	Economic analysis of water use (disaggregated into at least industry, households and agriculture), taking into account the principle of recovery of the costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs, as well as long term forecasts of supply and demand for water in the international River Basin.	Spring 2024	National authorities from each country	Possibility of study	Depending on the availability of relevant information and data in each country	7
2.10	Coordination of existing operational and surveillance monitoring programmes of surface and ground water bodies and proposals for enhancement of the network in order to establish a coherent and comprehensive overview of water status within the River Basin.	Summer 2024	National authorities from each country	Joint project by the involved Institutions from each country	Cost of the joint project estimated at 450.000 € for 3 years	3, 7
2.11	Harmonisation of classification systems (reference conditions, class boundaries) for the assessment of the ecological status of surface water	Summer 2024	National authorities from	Task group comprised of	To be determined on the basis of	3, 7

<b>Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible actors</b>	<b>Method of implementation</b>	<b>Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding</b>	<b>Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*</b>
	bodies, in order the ecological (biological, physico-chemical, hydromorphological) monitoring results (EQR values) to be comparable.		each country	experts by each country. Classification system to be approved by EC	the availability of relevant information	
2.12	Harmonisation of the environmental quality standards (EQS) for priority substances and certain other pollutants in surface waters and for specific pollutants in ground waters, in accordance with the relative EU Directives, for the assessment of the chemical status.	October 2023	National authorities from each country	Task group comprised of experts by each country	No extra cost	3, 7
2.13	Setting of management objectives for the surface and ground water bodies of the River Basin, including the exemptions of the environmental objectives, e.g. less stringent objectives.	Autumn 2024	Working Group on Water Management (WGWM)	Discussion within WGWM on the basis of the results of the previous actions	No extra cost foreseen	7
2.14	Development of a coordinated programme of basic and supplementary cost-effective measures in order to achieve the environmental objectives, e.g. measures to promote an efficient and sustainable water use, measures to prevent or control the input of pollutants, measures for the recovery of cost of water services, measures for the protection of water abstracted for drinking water, legislative and administrative instruments, economic instruments, emission controls, abstraction controls, demand management measures, efficiency and reuse measures, construction projects, rehabilitation projects, educational and research projects, etc.	Autumn 2024	National authorities from each country	Study	To be determined on the basis of the results of the previous actions and the availability of relevant information	7, 8
2.15	Public participation activities to encourage the active participation of the interested parties in the international River Basin and consultation of the public in the development of the shared River Basin Management Plan (RBMP), including information on how the consultation on the shared RBMP is managed (including response periods), the arrangements in place to allow members of the public access to the background documents and an overview of the significant water management issues identified in the international River Basin.	End of 2024	National authorities from each country	Activities to be organised and coordinated by PPMC Secretariat	To be determined at a later stage	7

<b>Objective 2: Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description of action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible actors</b>	<b>Method of implementation</b>	<b>Estimated cost (in €) / Possible source of funding</b>	<b>Connection to WGWM list of priorities (No)*</b>
2.16	Development of a common River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Prespa Lakes River Basin based on all the above actions.	2025	National authorities from each country	Collection and elaboration of the results of all previous actions	To be determined at a later stage	7

**\* List of priorities in water cooperation for Prespa for 2022, in accordance to the summary minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Water**

**Management:**

1. Exchange of data collected and information;
2. Creation of a platform for exchange of information (or build upon the same as the PPMC);
3. Monitoring systems and status assessment with harmonized methodology;
4. Inventory of identified pressures;
5. Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa;
6. Information exchange on public utilities and decentralized treatment;
7. Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources;
8. Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation for achieving good water quality status
9. Creation of a road map for the above priorities by the next meeting;
10. Preparation of a Water Balance Study for Prespa Lakes.

## **Annex III**

### **Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area**

### **Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) of the Prespa Park Management Committee**

### **Rules of Organization and Procedure – Proposed amendment of Terms of Reference (ToR) ~~as approved by the PPMC on 23.06.2022~~ 31.01.2023**

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#### **Article 1**

##### **Functions of the WGWM**

1. The WGWM is a standing expert group of the PPMC and operates under the auspices of the latter. More specifically, the WGWM will assist the PPMC in identifying and obtaining the water management information required for policy-making purposes and will provide expert technical support to the PPMC, primarily by ensuring that all available water management information is presented to the PPMC in an agreed and accessible manner.
2. The overall objective of the WGWM is to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of an integrated transboundary Prespa River Basin Management Plan as envisaged by the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). This objective will be pursued by providing technical expert support to the PPMC and by issuing recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management. In this context, the WGWM will facilitate cooperation and exchange of water-related information and will pursue the harmonisation of the water management plans among the three countries based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation.

#### **Article 2**

##### **Tasks of the WGWM**

1. Pursuant to article 14(4) and taking into account article 5 of the Prespa Park Agreement, the specific tasks and mandate of the WGWM are defined as follows. The WGWM will:
  - (i) Support the work of the PPMC in the preparation of discussion / decision papers on issues related to water protection and management.
  - (ii) Prepare a four-year workplan for the prioritization of the tasks and activities to be pursued, in accordance to the PPMC requests.
  - (iii) Facilitate the establishment of data-sharing mechanisms and agreements for the regular and ongoing exchange and assessment of available water management information, including: a) data on monitoring of water quality and quantity of water resources; b) data on current water uses and water abstractions of surface waters and their impacts on water quality and quantity; and c) data on surface water status (ecological and chemical) and on groundwater status (chemical and quantitative) as specified in the EU Water Framework Directive.
  - (iv) Facilitate the development of a transboundary water monitoring scheme with the collaboration of all national institutes responsible for the national water monitoring programmes applicable in the basin.
  - (v) Exchange information on existing or planned water uses that could affect the ecological character of the Prespa Lakes Basin and discuss possible remedial actions and alternative solutions.

(vi) Provide information concerning the development of any technical works in any part of the water basin which might cause impacts in the Prespa Lakes basin and update this information; evaluate relevant environmental impact assessments, in accordance with appropriate international standards.

(vii) Facilitate the coordination of activities in order to ensure consistency and harmonisation of the water management plans in the Prespa Lakes Basin based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation. In specific, facilitate the coordination of activities towards the following objectives:

- a. Set environmental targets and adapt to these the water uses in the river basin
- b. Development of consistent reference conditions and water quality elements for the surface and groundwater resources
- c. Adoption of appropriate joint emission limits for wastewater and threshold values for groundwater according to EU legislation
- d. Identification of Significant Water Management Issues which can directly or indirectly affect the quality of the surface and groundwater resources
- e. Elaboration of an inventory of Protected Areas according to the EU Water Framework Directive requirements
- f. Coordination of programmes of measures among the three countries

(viii) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms and procedures to facilitate transboundary cooperation and exchange knowledge among the water management authorities and interested stakeholders at the river basin level.

(ix) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate cooperation in scientific research programmes.

(x) Facilitate the coordination of activities and make related recommendations towards the establishment of early warning systems and procedures and facilitate related preparatory work towards the development of risk management and contingency plans for extreme events of floods and droughts.

(xi) Facilitate better understanding of the law and policy context for water management activities, including analysis and exchange of information on relevant EU legislation, national law, international law and standards on transboundary waters and protected areas.

(xii) Liaise in respect of technical matters with the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee.

### **Article 3**

#### **Composition of the WGWM**

The WGWM will consist of a total of 7 members, including:

- a. one representative of the national water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties who may be assisted by national experts,
- b. one representative of the regional water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties,
- c. one representative from the European Commission, DG ENV, Water Unit (or relevant regional Commission official)

The members of the WGWM are appointed – and replaced if need arises - by the Minister for the Environment of each State Party and by the European Commission, respectively.

Each member may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorised to replace her/him in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related WGWM work.

## Article 4

### Organisation of work of the WGWM

1. *Meetings:* The WGWM will convene twice a year, in the same country. The venue of the WGWM meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. ~~It is specified that during the first four years of operation, the WGWM meetings will be convened in Greece since according to article 14 (5) of the Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the operational costs of the WGWM shall be covered for the first four years of its operation by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~ Their dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting. Extraordinary meetings may also be held upon request of the PPMC and whenever deemed necessary by any of the three State Parties or the European Commission. It is further provided that one of the two annual meetings of the WGWM under the same chair might be organized via teleconference following the relevant decision of the PPMC.

2. *Decisions and recommendations:* The Working Group on Water Management will propose recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management, as reflected in the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), for the adoption by the PPMC.

Recommendations of the WGWM to the Prespa Park Management Committee will be based on consensus and shall be included in the Minutes of the WGWM.

3. *Chair:* The WGWM will be chaired on a rotational basis for a period of one year by each of the national water authority representative. The annual rotation of the Chair of the WGWM follows the rotating Chair of the PPMC ~~even if the WGWM meetings convene in Greece during the first four years of the WGWM operation.~~ It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the WGWM for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next country takes over. In case of absence of the state representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate. The powers and duties of the Chair shall be to: a. Convene the regular meetings of the WGWM.

b. Prepare the draft agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members. Any member may propose agenda items.

c. Preside over each meeting of the WGWM.

d. Review the Minutes summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the PPMC Secretariat; ensure their review by all members of the WGWM at the end of the meeting; incorporate feedback; ensure signing of the final Minutes by all representatives of the national water services / Ministries of Environment of the three State Parties and the European Commission; ensure that Minutes are sent to the PPMC through the Secretariat; and that copies of the signed Minutes are circulated to representatives of the national water services of the three State Parties and the European Commission.

e. Ensure the observance of the present Terms of Reference.

The PPMC Secretariat will assist the chair in performing the above duties.

4. *Working language:* The working language of the WGWM is English ~~and the working documents of the WGWM are also to be drafted in English.~~

5. *Communication:* Internal communication among members of the WGWM between meetings will be conducted through electronic means (preferably e-mail, web meetings etc.)

6. *Technical expertise:* In the event that the WGWM lacks sufficient technical expertise on a relevant issue or specific thematic area on an agenda item: **af.** Relevant expert(s) (from the Parties or international experts) may be invited to participate in the meeting(s) on an ad hoc basis ; and/or

**gb.** Ad hoc Task Groups may be established to contribute to the work of the WGWM, upon guidance by the latter.

7. *Attendance of meetings:* The WGWM meetings will be open to the PPMC and Secretariat members. Interested parties and stakeholders may be invited to participate in the meetings on an ad hoc basis upon mutual prior consent by all the WGWM members.

## Article 5

### Expenses of the WGWM

~~1. The operational costs of the WGWM (i.e. accommodation expenses and meals of all WGWM members during meetings taking place in Greece and organisation of meetings thereof) shall be covered for the first four years of its operation through funding provided by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~

~~2. After the end of this period,~~ The PPMC will cover the costs of operation of the WGWM by its core budget, the Party in whose territory a WGWM meeting will be organised shall bear the cost of organizing the meeting, and each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its members (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the WGWM meetings.