

Signing of an Agreement of Cooperation for Prespa Net

3 April 2013

Albania
Greece
North Macedonia



A press release issued today announced that, on 29 March 2013, a transboundary Agreement of Cooperation was signed between three environmental NGOs from the three countries sharing the Prespa lakes. The Trilateral Prespa Park was first supported by the Ramsar Convention and inaugurated on World Wetlands Day 2000 by the three presidents of the three countries involved. Later on, the three environment ministers and the EU environment commissioner signed an agreement of joint management, on World Wetlands Day 2010. Emphasizing that cooperation of civil society is essential for an integrated management of the Prespa lakes' basin, the representatives of the following environmental NGOs - the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), the Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), and the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) - came together in the Prespa village of Laimos, Greece, to officially lay the foundations of their environmental network for the region, called Prespa Net. The Greek Prespa Society was one of the first Ramsar Award winners in 1999.

Acknowledging their common and long-standing transboundary cooperation in Prespa, the agreement was signed after deciding upon the aim, objectives and main scope of the network and potential joint activities that can be taken in the future.

Having in mind the past activities and projects implemented in the region it is now clearly a lesson learned that taking a fragmented and isolated approach instead of a more inclusive and cross-border approach is less effective if not fruitless at times. For this purpose, Prespa Net will actively work to fill the gaps by means of synergized activities, enhanced cooperation between the different stakeholders involved in the management of Prespa Lakes Basin, better flow of information on ecological and sustainable development issues affecting this region, and raising the voice for adequate policies needed in the area.

In the frame of the newly formed network, these 3 organizations have taken a step forward and committed themselves towards safeguarding the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Prespa region, and at the same time promoting sustainable socio-economic development. In the

upcoming months, Prespa Net will launch its first common activities, breaking thus the geographical borders and respecting the unity of Nature.

Source: Society for the Protection of Prespa - www.spp.gr

Photo: courtesy of Tobias Salathé, Senior Regional Advisor for Europe

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