



**Transboundary cooperation in the Prespa Park –
Brief overview and challenges under the
perspective of environmental organisations**

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Transboundary Prespa

- High-altitude basin 2,510 km² shared by Albania, Greece and North Macedonia
- 2 connected lakes, Great Prespa and Lesser Prespa, and the surrounding mountains (above 2,000m asl)
- Extraordinary biodiversity for such a small area (more than 1,800 plant species, 45 mammals, 23 fish and 85 birds), natural beauty, cultural values and monuments
- Turbulent history, depopulation
- Small population (around 1,000)
- Primary sector and tourism



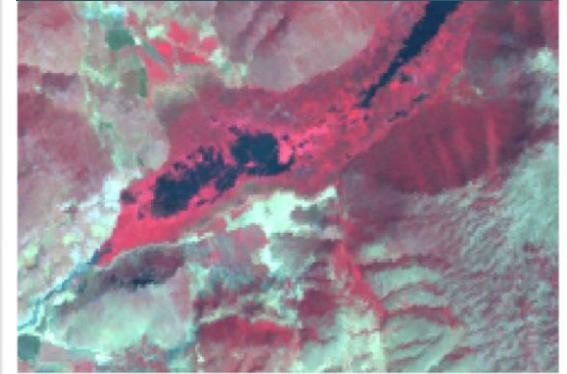
1960-1970: locally defined use of natural resources – first voices highlighting the importance of Prespa



ires come to the forefront



August 1988



August 2000



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The 1990s: Emergence of civil society working for the conservation of Prespa



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The 1990s: Emergence of civil society working for the conservation of Prespa

Scientific symposia for transboundary Prespa
1997 Korcha
2000 Oteshevo



The 2000s: Institutional recognition of need to protect transboundary Prespa

- On World Wetlands Day 2000, the 3 Prime ministers declare the establishment of the Prespa Park (2/2/2000)

“This Declaration will be followed by **enhanced co-operation among competent authorities** in our countries with regard to environmental matters. In this context, joint actions would be considered in order 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**, and
- d) to spare no efforts so that the "Prespa Park" become and remain a **model of its kind** as well as an additional reference to the peaceful collaboration among our countries.”



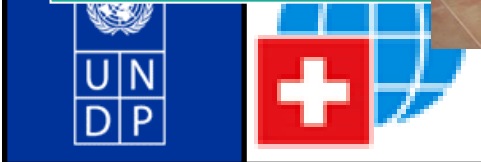
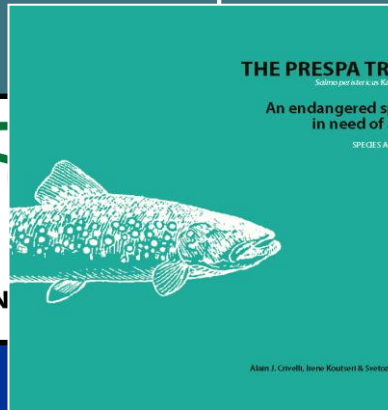
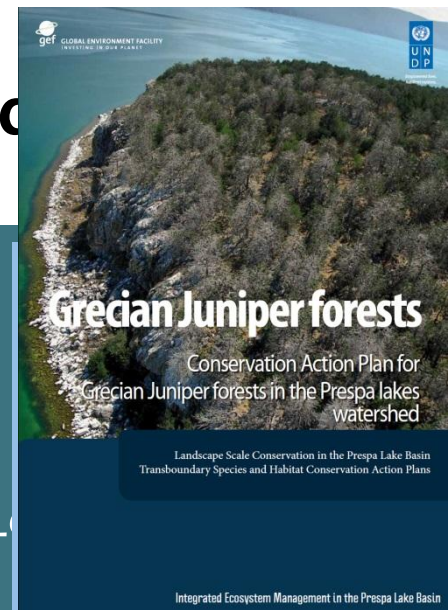
The 2000s: Institutional recognition of need to protect transboundary Prespa

- Operation of Prespa Park Coordination Committee (envNGOs serve as its Secretariat)
- 2001-2008: 11 regular and 2 extraordinary meetings



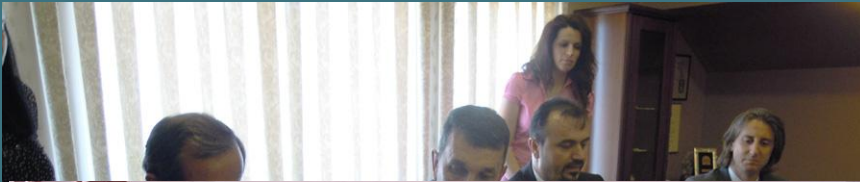
The 2000s: Important projects for biodiversity

- Main transboundary projects:
 - ✓ «Strategic Action Plan for the sustainable development of the Prespa Park» 2001-2002
 - ✓ «Study for the interaction of River Devolli with Lake L...
 - ✓ «The Prespa trout» (2007-2008)
 - ✓ UNDP GEF project (2006-2012) with various
 - 5 transboundary action plans for the...
 - species a...



The 2000s: Institutional recognition of need to protect transboundary Prespa

- Sectoral trilateral collaboration
- Mayors' meetings and municipal cooperation



Protected area meeting



Fire-fighting authorities meeting



NGO meeting

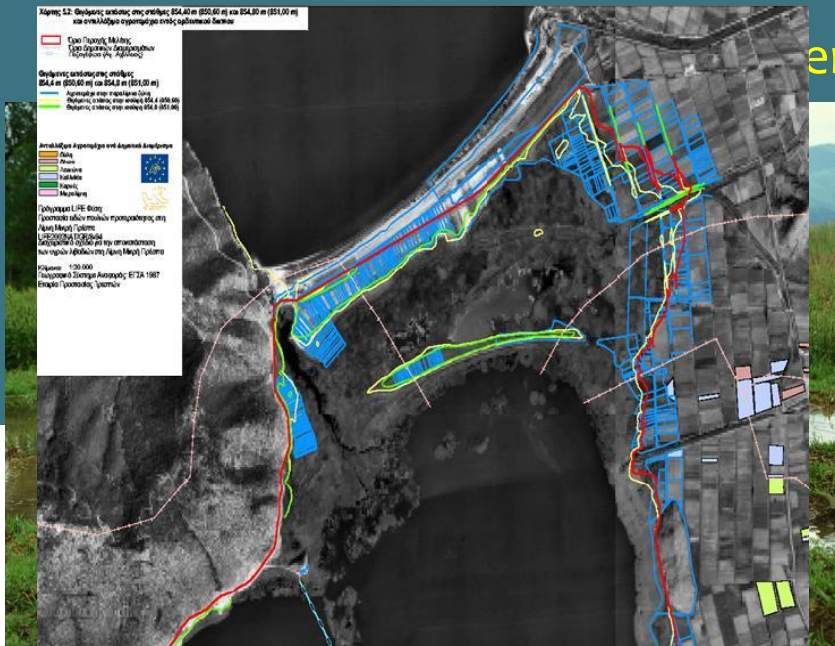
The 2000s: Important projects for biodiversity

Greece

- Re-designation and enlargement of the protected area as a National Park (2009) – establishment of Management Body (2003)
- European LIFE-Nature project by SPP for the restoration of wet meadows in Lesser Prespa (2002-2007)

Wet meadows begin

as



The 2010s: Transboundary cooperation in the era of economic crisis

- The Prespa Park Agreement is signed in 2010 by the 3 littoral countries and the EU but does not enter into force and is not implemented



The 2010s: Transboundary cooperation in the era of economic crisis

- **Eutrophication of the Lakes:** Projects to study and address the phenomenon in North Macedonia (UNDP/SDC 2012-2018) and Greece (SPP 2013-2017)
- Municipality of Resen undertakes environmental management and monitoring of water quality



The 2010s: The PrespaNet

2013 – The **PrespaNet** is established to promote conservation and sustainable development in the Prespa Park area, for biodiversity and people, with joint actions across the borders.



PPNEA

Institution for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania

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of the NGOs
Strategy

Joint actions



1980-2020: A few conclusions and lessons learnt

- Important work has been carried out for conservation and sustainable development at the national and transboundary level
- Top-down - bottom-up approach
- Especially increased interest of the international community – establishment of special fund, the PONT. The concept of integrated management attracts international funding , which in turn catalyses transboundary cooperation, dialogue and consensus building



1980-2020: A few conclusions and lessons learnt

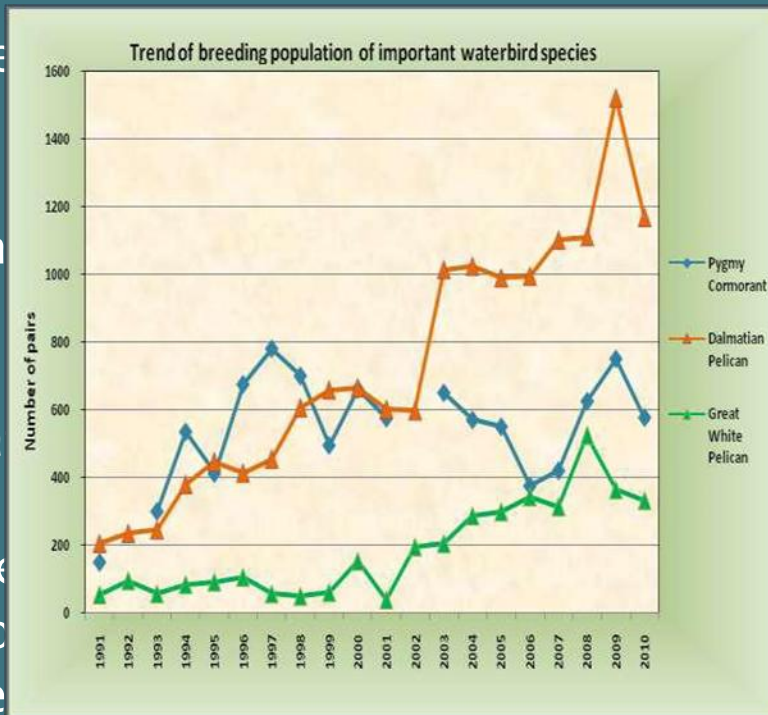
- Very significant results for certain species (esp. pelicans) and sites

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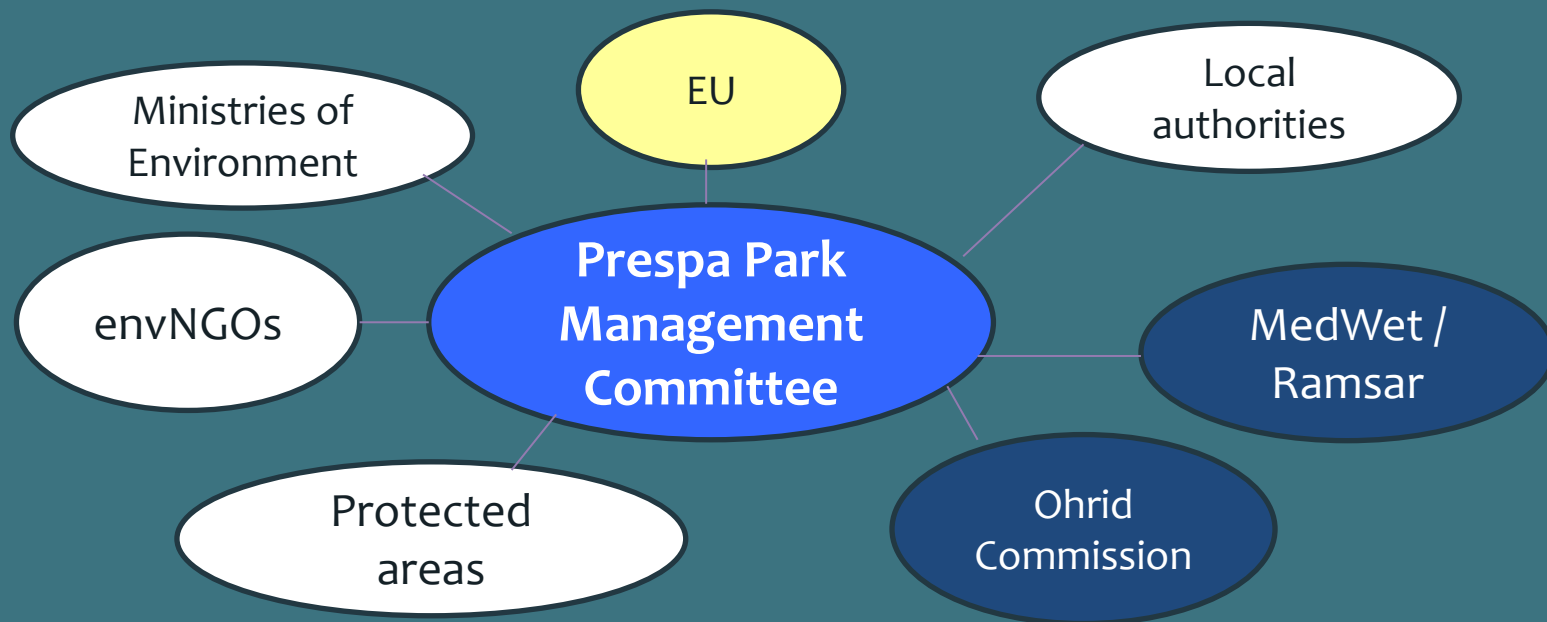
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The 2020s: Institutional interstate collaboration and the challenges of tomorrow

- Ratification by Greece (2017)
- Entry into force (2019) – binding character
- EU participation!
- Start of operation of joint bodies: High-level Segment - Prespa Park Management Committee – Secretariat – Working Group on Water Management



The 2020s: Institutional interstate collaboration and the challenges of tomorrow

What should the central states and the EU do?

- Coordination of services
- Transboundary dialogue
- Strategic planning of priorities and targets
- Respect of political and financial commitments as governments change

- Joint adaptation measures for changes brought about by the climate crisis

- The EU can be the catalyst for decisions addressing today's needs (European Green Deal)

The 2020s: Institutional interstate collaboration and the challenges of tomorrow

As decades go by, geopolitical tensions come and go, circumstances change but Prespa remains our common home!

“3 countries, 2 lakes, 1 future”

«3 χώρες, 2 λίμνες, 1 μέλλον»

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Thank you for your attention

