



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

A7-0078/2011

23.3.2011

RECOMMENDATION

on the draft Council decision concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area
(16581/2010 – C7-0007/2011 – 2010/0300(NLE))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Kriton Arsenis

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

CONTENTS

	Page
DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION	4
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	4
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE	4

DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**on the draft Council decision concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area
(16581/2010 – C7-0007/2011 – 2010/0300(NLE))**

(Consent)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (16581/2010),
 - having regard to the draft Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area (16581/2010),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 192(1) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C7-0007/2011),
 - having regard to Rules 81 and 90(8) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A7-0078/2011),
1. Consents to conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, of Albania and of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The European Union has a long-standing legislation protecting its waters, whose most significant achievement is, perhaps, the 2000 Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (WFD)¹, establishing the objective of protection of all waters (rivers, lakes, ground-waters and coastal waters) and providing for the coordination of river basins, across administrative and political boundaries, to achieve this objective. Under the WFD, where river basins extend beyond the territory of the Union, Member States shall endeavour to establish coordination with the non-Member States which share the river basin district². Where coordination takes the form of an international agreement, participation of the European Union as a Party is necessary to the extent that the agreement covers matters falling within the Union's competence.

The **Prespa Lakes Basin** (Prespa Park Area) is shared between Greece, FYROM and Albania. The first is a Member State of the European Union, the second a candidate country for EU membership and the third a potential candidate country for EU membership. Albania and FYROM have also concluded a Stabilization and Association agreement with the EU.

The Prespa Park Area is a natural area of international importance owing to its geomorphological, ecological, biodiversity and cultural significance. It is a vital habitat for the conservation of numerous rare and/or endemic fauna and flora species, as a nesting place of globally threatened birds, and as a depository of significant archaeological and traditional heritage. For these reasons, these three countries:

- with the declaration of 2 February 2000, announced the creation of the Prespa Park Area as a protected cross-border area, the first of its kind in south-eastern Europe;
- with the joint statement of their Prime Ministers of 27 November 2009, committed themselves to work together for the integrated protection of the ecosystem and the sustainable development of the Prespa Park Area, establishing a specific framework of priorities, initiatives and actions;
- on 2 February 2010, signed the **Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area**, with the participation of the EU, which also requires the consent of the European Parliament. The Commission participated on behalf of the EU in the negotiations drawing up the text of the Agreement on the basis of the authorisation issued by the Council³, pursuant to Article 175 and Article 300, paragraph 1, of the EC Treaty.

The purpose of the Agreement is to establish cooperation so as to ensure the integrated

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

² Article 3, paragraph 5, of Directive 2000/60/EC.

³ Council Decision of 27 June 2007 on the participation of the European Community in negotiations aiming at the conclusion of international river basin agreements to improve cooperation in European river basins shared between certain Member States and Third Countries.

protection of the ecosystem and the sustainable development of the Prespa Park Area, including the drawing up of integrated river basin management plans, in accordance with international and EU standards.

In order to attain this objective, the Parties have committed themselves to take the necessary measures and apply the best available techniques, individually and in cooperation, on the basis of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, mutual benefit and good faith, in order to:

- manage the waters of the Prespa Lakes;
- prevent, control and reduce water pollution in the Prespa Lakes Area;
- protect and conserve the biodiversity of the area on the basis of international and EU legislation, including Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC;
- protect the soil from erosion, depletion, infections and pollution;
- ensure the prudent use of natural resources and sustainable development;
- prevent the introduction and breeding of alien animal and plant species;
- regulate the activities which cause or may cause negative impact in the Prespa Lakes Area in order to prevent or minimise such effects.

The Agreement will contribute to the successful implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, to protecting the environment, improving the living standards of local inhabitants and promoting cooperation between the three countries, thereby strengthening good neighbourly relations between the Parties in the Balkans, a particularly sensitive area.

The development of a sustainable economy and green infrastructures, which will naturally lead to job creation at local level, will create a significant potential for employment, thereby contributing to the realisation of the 'Europe 2020' Strategy. Furthermore, a better use of resources, sustainable economic development and nature conservation can and must go hand in hand¹.

Sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem services will make a decisive contribution towards ensuring the prosperity of the region. According to a study on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)², the loss of biodiversity translates into substantive losses in terms of the economy and prosperity, while any attempt to avert the loss of biodiversity is cost-effective and feasible.

It also points out that the natural environment is the most effective way of regulating the climate and is at the same time the largest carbon sink, given that land and marine ecosystems currently absorb approximately half of man-made CO₂ emissions. Healthy and hardy ecosystems are a safety valve for climate change since they help mitigate its effects and make

¹ Resolution of the European Parliament of 21 September 2010 on the implementation of EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity (2009/2108(INI)).

² 'TEEB Interim Report', May 2008: 'TEEB for Policy-Makers', November 2009: <http://www.teebweb.org>.

adjustments to cope with them¹.

The Agreement is also in line with the new Strategic Plan for the protection of biodiversity for the period 2011-2020, with a vision up to 2050, concluded at the recent UN Conference in Nagoya in Japan; it provides, inter alia, for attempts to reduce the rate of loss of natural habitats by 50% and, where possible, to halt it altogether, thereby removing the risk to endangered and threatened species up to 2020².

Under Article 218, paragraph 6(a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Council must secure the consent of the European Parliament in order to adopt the Agreement.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety unreservedly agrees that Parliament should give its consent to this Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area.

¹ Convenient solutions to an inconvenient truth: ecosystem-based approaches to climate change», World Bank, 2009· «TEEB Climate Issues Update», Σεπτέμβριος 2009· «The Natural Fix? The role of ecosystems in climate mitigation», UNEP, June, 2009.

² *Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Nagoya Japan, 18-29 October 2010.*

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	16.3.2011
Result of final vote	+: 57 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Kriton Arsenis, Pilar Ayuso, Paolo Bartolozzi, Sandrine Bélier, Sergio Berlato, Nessa Childers, Chris Davies, Bairbre de Brún, Bas Eickhout, Edite Estrela, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Elisabetta Gardini, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Satu Hassi, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Dan Jørgensen, Karin Kadenbach, Christa Kläß, Holger Kraemer, Corinne Lepage, Peter Liese, Linda McAvan, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Miroslav Ouzký, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Gilles Pargneaux, Antonyia Parvanova, Andres Perello Rodriguez, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Mario Pirillo, Pavel Poc, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Anna Rosbach, Oreste Rossi, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Carl Schlyter, Horst Schnellhardt, Richard Seeber, Theodoros Skylakakis, Bogusław Sonik, Salvatore Tatarella, Åsa Westlund, Glenis Willmott, Sabine Wils, Marina Yannakoudakis
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jutta Haug, Philippe Juvin, Marisa Matias, Bill Newton Dunn, Bart Staes, Eleni Theocharous, Thomas Ulmer, Marita Ulvskog, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Konrad Szymański