

**Question for written answer E-002300/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Delays in implementing the integrated cross-border protection scheme for the Prespa Lakes

Cross-border cooperation between the three countries that share the Prespa Lakes began 14 years ago with the establishment of the Prespa Park – the first cross-border protected area in the Balkans. This initiative, which has been praised by the international community as courageous and innovative, has been suspended for four years due to the refusal of the Greek government to ratify the international agreement it signed in 2010 with two other littoral countries and the EU, according to the Society for the Protection of Prespa<sup>1</sup>. The agreement provides for the establishment of transnational cooperation mechanisms and regular consultation between the parties to protect the environment of Prespa and the creation of a more specific working group on water management involving the relevant water management authorities of the four parties. According to recent studies, the water quality of the Lakes is threatened by eutrophication. Furthermore, because the water from the Prespa Lakes flows downstream to Lake Ohrid, the Black Drin and Lake Skadar and eventually into the Adriatic, the state of this water can affect the entire length of the river basin until it flows into the sea. The water management plan should therefore be undertaken on a larger scale, with the active participation of all stakeholders and citizens from all the littoral/riparian countries. Although the national water management plans for the Prespa basin have now been drawn up by all the countries concerned, with the exception of Albania, broader cross-border and regional planning and integrated river basin management – as required by international and European rules – are still lacking.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have any information about why the Greek government has delayed for so long the ratification of the international agreement to protect the Prespa Lakes and whether it intends to ratify it or not ?
2. What steps can it take to strengthen and accelerate the integration of broader cross-border regional planning and implement the integrated management of this drainage basin, part of which is included in the European Natura 2000 network?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.spp.gr/spp/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&catid=6%3A2010-03-04-13-52-03&id=151%3A31-2014-&Itemid=20&lang=el](http://www.spp.gr/spp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=6%3A2010-03-04-13-52-03&id=151%3A31-2014-&Itemid=20&lang=el)