



Dear all,

In this document you will find the complete list of participants and the conclusions from the round table 'Impact of planned infrastructure projects on the biodiversity in the Ohrid-Prespa region' that the Animal and Environment Protection Association E.D.E.N. organized with the financial support of the Global Green Grants Fund.

PARTICIPANTS

1. Prof. Jos Verhoeven, President of the European Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists
2. Prof. Trajče Talevski, Citizens' Initiative Ohrid SOS
3. Menka Spirovska, DEKONS-EMA
4. Martina Blinkova, IECE
5. Prof. Slavčo Hristovski, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics Skopje
6. Stefanka Hadji Pecova, retired expert
7. Emilija Apostolova Čalovska, Citizens' Initiative Ohrid SOS
8. Prof. Aleksandar Trendafilov, Faculty of Forestry Skopje
9. Prof. Zlatko Levkov, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics Skopje
10. Aleksandar Nastov, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning/Environment Department
11. Zojka Naskova, Citizens' Initiative Ohrid SOS
12. Marjan Kalevski, E.D.E.N.
13. Dragana Velkovska, CEO of E.D.E.N.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is mandatory that Studenchishte Marsh remains a strictly protected zone and is proclaimed Monument of Nature
2. Keeping the Marsh only in its current boundaries is not enough – it should be revitalized and its area increased so that its positive impact on the lake will be much greater
3. There is a certain level of communication between the Marsh and the Lake, but it is not enough, more has to be done in this respect
4. The Integrated Study about Studenchishte Marsh prepared by DEKONS EMA is not to be revised with the aim to shrink/degrade the initially planned area of protection
5. There is a need of a new comprehensive study to establish in detail the existing surface of the Studenchishte Marsh and to provide revitalization recommendations
6. A large number of endemic species inhabit Studenchishte Marsh
7. There are 4 newly discovered types of diatoms in Studenchishte Marsh
8. Wetlands abound in ecosystem services which have been monetized by economists
9. Wetlands bound carbon in the soil (making them allies in the fight against climate change), absorb water that could otherwise cause floods in residential areas, and act as water purifiers
10. Ohrid Lake must not be used as a mere water reservoir
11. Ohrid Lake is a Balkan Galapagos and we have no right to destroy it
12. Compensation of natural values must be prohibited, especially in biodiversity hotspots (such as the Galičica National Park and Studenchishte Marsh)
13. The only way for a long-lasting financial benefit for the locals is investing in micro and small businesses fostering sustainable development



14. In the case of Studenchishte Marsh such opportunity for fostering sustainable development would be establishment of a Research and Visitor Center
15. Early Christian Basilica Studenchishte is an archeological site connected to the Marsh and the springs, and it too can be included in the offer of the Research and Visitor Center
16. A few people who may or may not be Macedonian are usually the sole beneficiaries from the capital infrastructure projects
17. The realization of the planned infrastructure projects will deter tourists
18. Destroying nature would mean destroying tourism in the region
19. Ohrid-Prespa region is ideal for sustainable tourism, the only thing it lacks is suitable strategy and promotion
20. Sustainable development of the region is possible, but it is of pivotal importance that institutions start working for the benefit of Macedonian citizens and for the good of the country
21. Science is to shape development, not the other way around – development distorting and misusing scientific facts
22. The Ohrid region is already on the Ramsar shadow list upon suggestion of the MOEPP
23. The Ohrid region satisfies the Ramsar designation criteria and the process initiated by Ohrid SOS for the official obtaining of status is already underway
24. The damage to the ecosystems in Macedonia is huge and it has to be urgently repaired

Thank you all for your participation and input, hopefully our joint efforts will translate into preserving this precious region for generations to come. These conclusions will be used in future efforts to ensure meaningful protection of habitats and sustainable development in the Ohrid-Prespa region.

Sincerely,
Animal and Environment Protection Association E.D.E.N.