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## Press release

**« Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid Region »**

**Inception workshop  
Hotel Millenium, Pogradec (Albania), 15-16 September 2014**

On 15 and 16 September 2014, the Inception Workshop in Pogradec, Albania, will kick-start a three year project aimed at reinforcing the protection and sustainable development of the Lake Ohrid region.

This 2.64 million USD project is funded by the European Union in the framework of the EU assistance to pre-accession countries in the field of Environment and Climate Change. The EU contribution amounts to 1.7 million EUR (approx. 2.4 million USD) and the Government of Albania will co-finance 10%.

**A press conference, to present this initiative will be held on 15 September 2014 at 10.30 am at the Hotel Millenium, Rruga Driloni, Tushemisht, Pogradec area.**

About 30 representatives from Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will participate in the Inception Workshop, including national authorities from the respective Ministries of Environment and Culture, local authorities from the Municipalities of the Lake Ohrid region, Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN, as well as representatives from the EU and UNESCO.

The project is designed to address the main threats affecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region such as unplanned urban development, waste management issues, habitat alteration, destruction and depletion of natural resources. It is aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries over the region's cultural and natural heritage.

In addition, the project aims to support the efforts of the national authorities in the preparation of a nomination file for the extension to Albania of the World Heritage property "Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region" recognised in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979.

The following project activities are foreseen:

- reinforcement of transboundary cooperation (Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
- establishment of integrated management mechanisms;
- capacity-building on management effectiveness and transboundary cooperation;
- profiling of the transboundary area and its sustainable tourism opportunities;

- technical assistance to the national authorities for the preparation of the extension file of a transboundary World Heritage property;
- implementation of waste awareness campaign through Pilot Actions on Waste Water and Solid Waste.

This joint EU UNESCO initiative is coordinated by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre with the support of the UNESCO Venice Office/Antenna Office in Sarajevo and will be implemented in close partnership with the Governments of Albania through the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and Ministry of Culture, as well as the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention: ICOMOS International, IUCN and ICCROM.

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