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SURVEY TARGETING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Assessing views and perceptions on freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin

Report

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Act4Drin project is being funded by the **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund**, a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.



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This report has been developed by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) within the framework of the Act4Drin project funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF).

The publication reflects the authors' views and doesn't commit the donors.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the CEPF funded Act4Drin project aiming at raising public awareness, enhancing knowledge and empowering NGOs to protect and conserve freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin, a survey was carried out aiming to shed light on the prevailing public views and perceptions towards freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin. This survey was prepared by MIO-ECSDE and was a pre-assignment of the Act4Drin Spring School 2016, organized by MIO-ECSDE in collaboration and with the support of BIOSFERA, EDEN, MES, GREENHOME, GRASHNICA, PPNEA, PROGEO, SOCA TRIPS and the University of Tirana, under the auspices of the University of Korca.

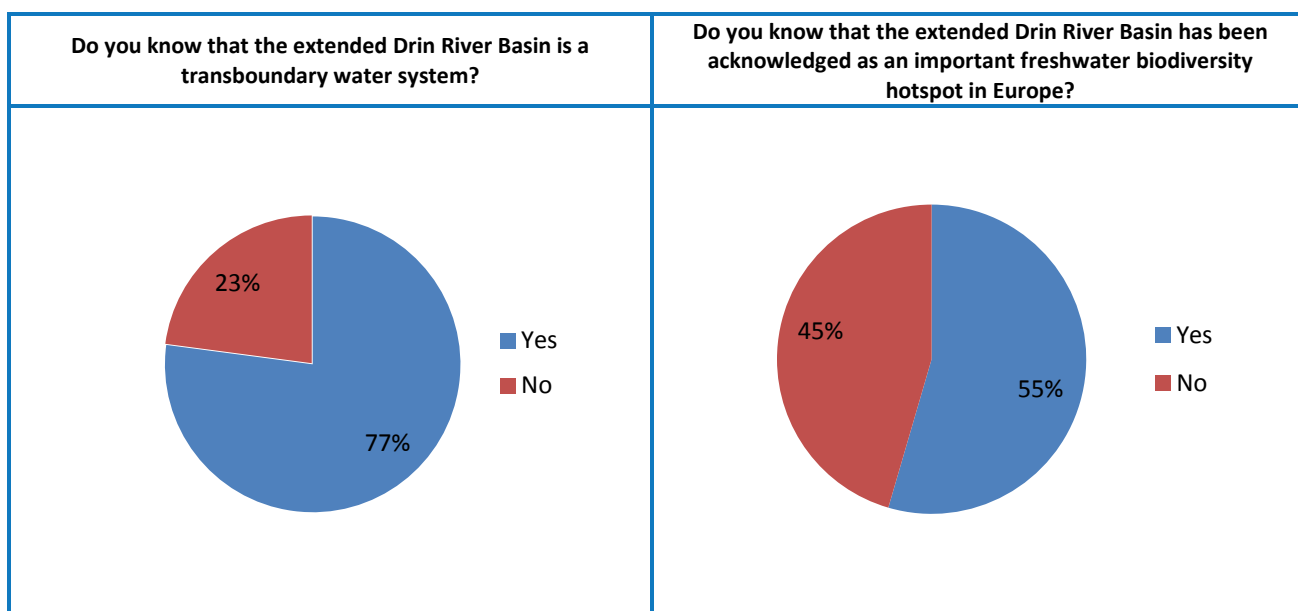
Some twenty six bright natural sciences students from the Drin Riparian countries, namely Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece ran the 2-week survey from 22 April to 6 May 2016, targeting mainly the local communities of the Drin River Basin.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

A total of 314 questionnaires were filled in out of the 390 targeted respondents (~81% response rate), mostly through direct interviews in person or over the phone. 48% of the interviewees came from Albania, 26% from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 22% from Montenegro and 4% from Greece. The number of respondents from each country was inevitably dependent on the number of Act4Drin Spring School students from each country.

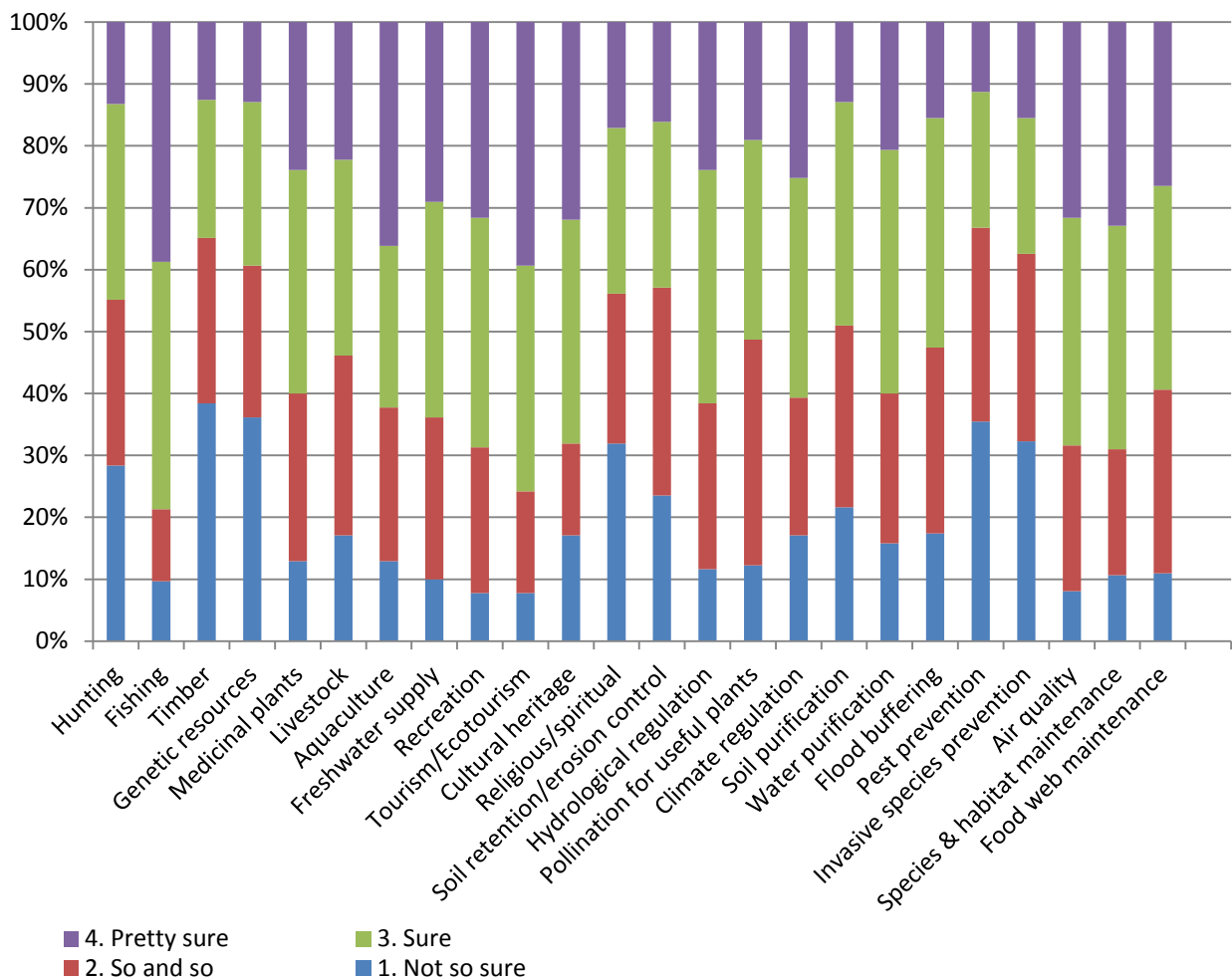
Out of the 314 respondents, 39% were male and 61% were female with 45% being between 21-30 years old, 19% between 31-40, 18% up to 20, 12% between 41-50 and the remaining 6% above 50 years of age. When it comes to their education, 64% of the respondents had received higher education (university, masters, doctorate), 10% had gone to college, 23% had finished high school, 2% had received vocational education and the remaining 1% had received no formal education.

It was revealing to see that a considerable percentage of the respondents (23%) was not aware that the Drin River Basin is a transboundary system. Furthermore, slightly less than half of the respondents (46%) didn't know that extended Drin River Basin has been acknowledged as an important freshwater biodiversity hotspot in Europe.



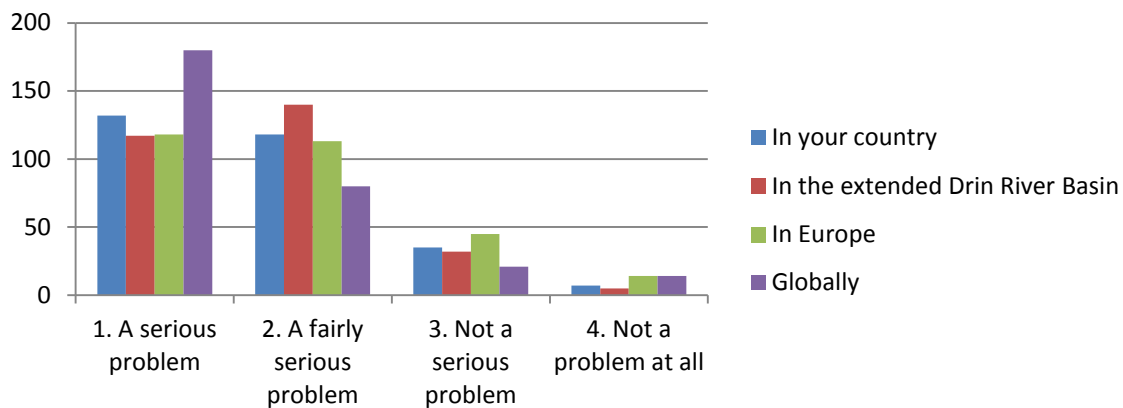
When asked about the type of services the extended Drin River Basin provides, the respondents were pretty confident (~60-80%) about those related to fishing, medicinal plants, aquaculture, freshwater supply, recreation, tourism and ecotourism, cultural heritage, hydrological regulation, climate regulation, water purification, air quality, species and habitat maintenance, and food web maintenance. It was interesting to see that some 55-70% were not sure whether the Drin River Basin provides services related to hunting, timber, spiritual wellbeing, erosion control, genetic resources, contributing to pest prevention and introduction of invasive species.

Which of the following services does the extended Drin River Basin provide?



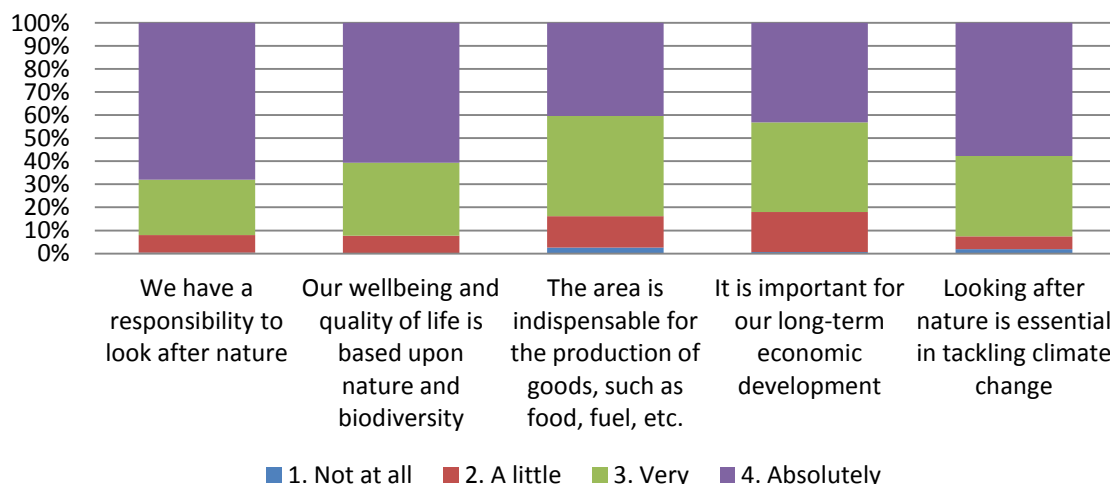
For the big majority of the respondents the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems is a serious or a fairly serious problem at Drin Basin level, but also at national, European and international level. This overwhelming concern is in line with the urgent need for action.

In your opinion, how serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems? 1-A serious problem, 2-A fairly serious problem, 3-Not a serious problem, 4-Not a problem at all

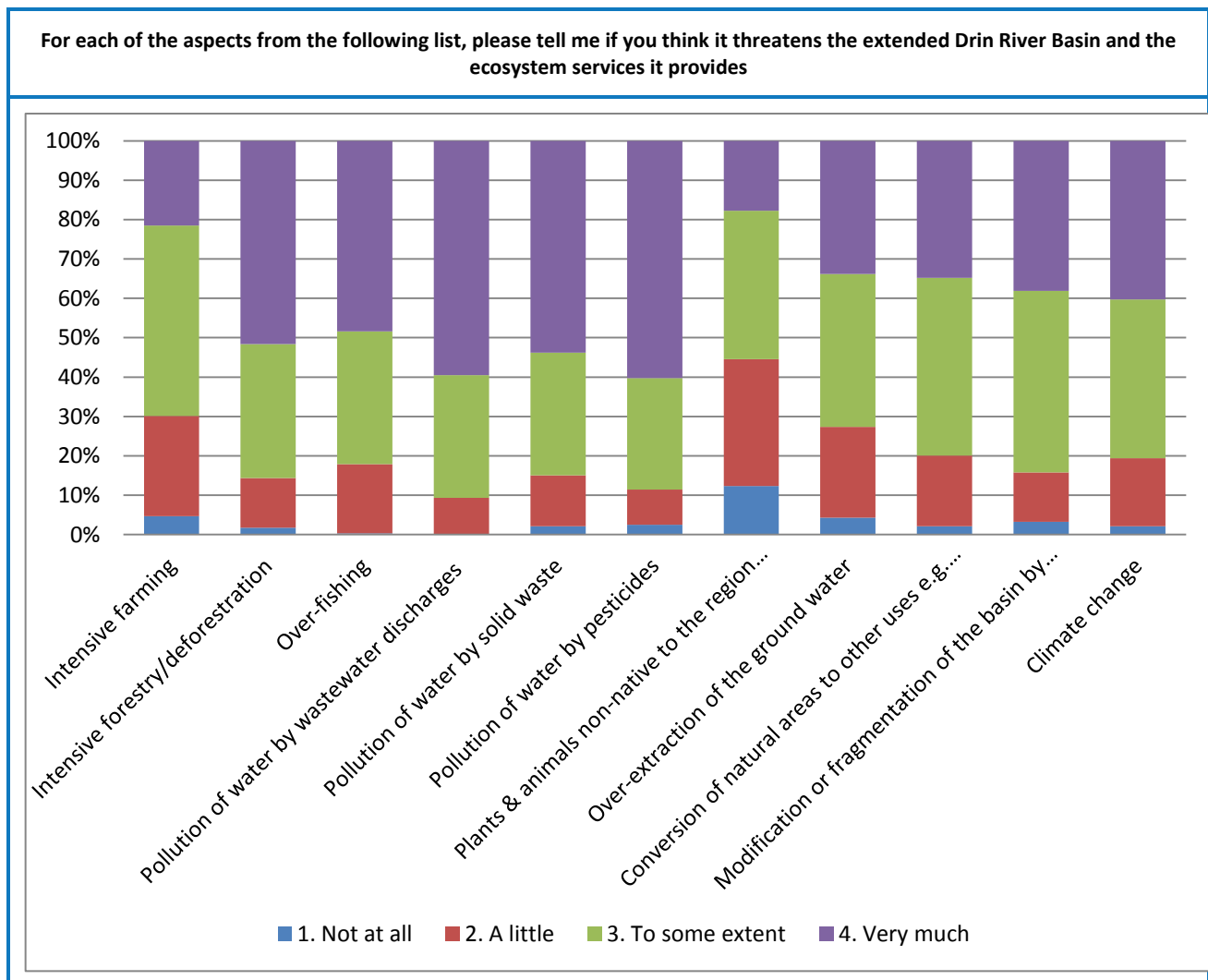


Regarding the importance of protecting the extended Drin River Basin it was reassuring to see that the vast majority of the respondents (~ 85-90%) strongly believes that we have a responsibility to look after nature, that our wellbeing and quality of life is based upon nature and biodiversity, that the area is indispensable for the production of goods, that nature is essential in tackling climate change and that nature is important for our long-term economic development. Interestingly though, some 15% of the respondents perceived the importance of the basin for goods provision and economic development as low.

In your opinion why is it important to protect the extended Drin River Basin? Check how much you agree with the following reasons for protecting it



When it comes to the pressures that threaten the Drin River Basin and the ecosystem services it provides, some 60% of the interviewees identified water pollution by wastewater discharges and pesticides as the most prominent ones, closely followed by intensive forestry & deforestation (50%), over-fishing and water pollution by solid waste. The pressures considered as the least threatening ones by considerable percentage of the respondents (30-40%) included intensive farming and introduction of invasive species.

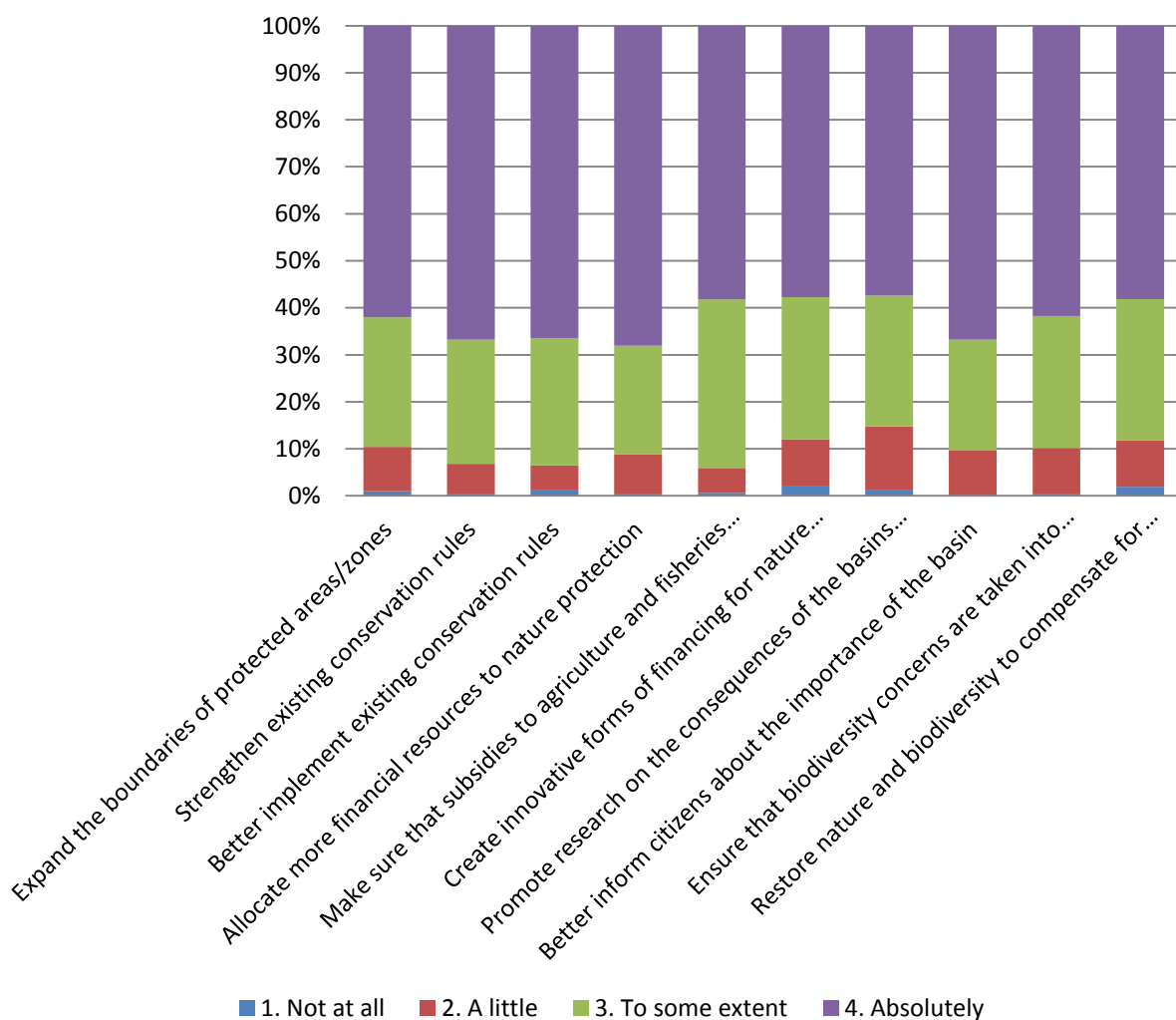


With regards to the measures needed for safeguarding and protecting the extended Drin River Basin the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that a blend of all proposed measures is needed, including:

- expansion of the boundaries of protected areas/zones;
- strengthening existing conservation rules;
- improving implementation of existing conservation rules;
- allocation of more financial resources to nature protection;
- ensuring that subsidies to agriculture and fisheries also take account of biodiversity;
- creating innovative forms of financing for nature conservation;
- promoting research on the consequences of the basin's degradation
- raising public awareness about the importance of the basin;

- ensuring that biodiversity concerns are taken into account when planning new infrastructure investments in the basin;
- restoring nature and biodiversity to compensate for damage caused by human activities or infrastructure outside protected areas.

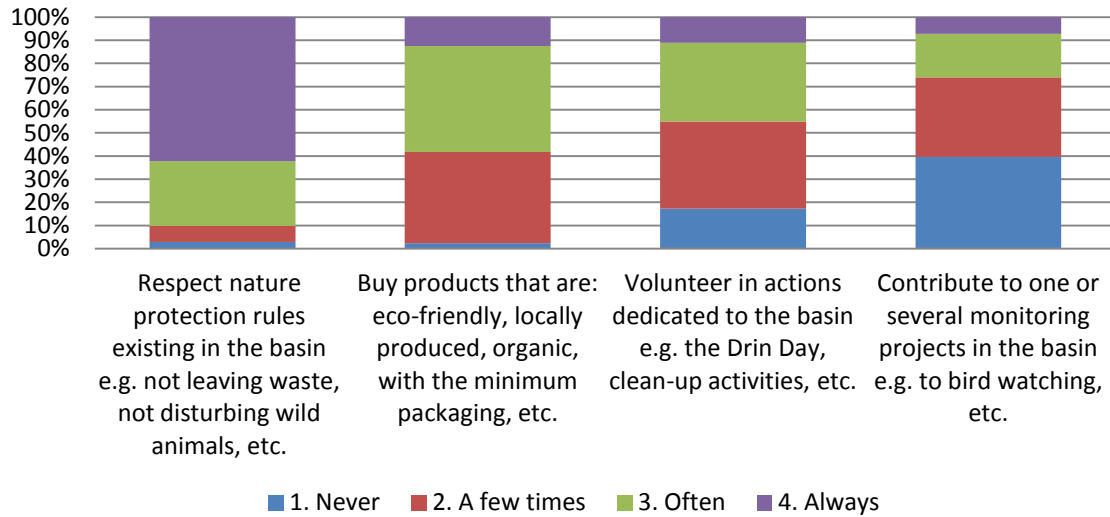
In your opinion in order to protect the extended Drin River Basin, the state should ... Check how much you agree with the following proposed actions



When it comes to promoting research on the consequences of the basin's degradation there was a considerable percentage of respondents (~13%) that regarded this measure as less imminent. It may be that most people feel that enough information and data already exists to support immediate actions.

Last, but not least, it was very revealing to see that when it comes to personal actions the respondents are willing to undertake the protection of the Drin River Basin. The big majority (~90%) claims that they always or often respect nature protection rules that apply in the basin. On the other hand 40% of them never or rarely buy eco-friendly products. Furthermore, almost half of them never or rarely participate in volunteer actions dedicated to the basin and even less (~10%) contribute to monitoring projects in the basin.

To what extent do you personally do the following ... Check by using the rating



ANNEX I

Survey for local communities

Assessing views and perceptions on freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin

We would like to invite you to take part in a survey about freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin.

Who is organizing this survey?

This survey is a pre-assignment of the Act4Drin Spring School 2016. The Spring School is organized within the framework of the CEPF (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund) funded Act4Drin project aiming at raising public awareness, enhancing knowledge and empowering NGOs to protect and conserve freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin. The Spring School is organized by MIO-ECSDE in collaboration with the project partner NGOs, BIOSFERA, EDEN, GREENHOME and MES.

What is the purpose of the survey?

We want to know more about your views and perceptions on freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin. The findings of this survey will trigger discussions at the Act4Drin Spring School and will shed light on local communities' attitudes towards freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin.

In the next few pages follow some questions and it should take no more than 5 minutes for you to respond. **There are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this survey. We are interested in your views and perspectives.**

How will the information collected be used?

Participation in this survey guarantees confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents. No one apart from the survey team will have any access to the information provided. Once the data are analyzed, a report with key findings and conclusions (with no specific references to respondents) will be sent to those that have contributed and will also be posted on the project's website (www.act4drin.net).

Contact for further information

For any further information or if you have any queries about this survey, feel free to contact the Project Leader, Thomais Vlachogianni (vlachogianni@mio-ecsde.org).

VOLUNTEER CONSENT

Please read the statements below and tick the box at the bottom to indicate your consent in taking part.

I have received adequate information about the survey and about my rights as a participant.

I fully understand that my participation is voluntary, the information I provide is confidential, and that I can withdraw my contribution from the survey at any time.

☐ Tick to confirm you agree to take part in this survey and continue to the next section

1. Please give us some info about yourself

a. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Other

b. What is your age?

- ☐ <20
☐ 21-30
☐ 31-40
☐ 41-50
☐ >50

c. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ No formal education
☐ High school
☐ College
☐ Vocational training
☐ University
☐ Masters
☐ Doctorate/PhD
☐ other, please specify _____

d. Which country do you come from?

- ☐ Albania
☐ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
☐ Greece
☐ Montenegro
☐ Kosovo
☐ other, please specify _____

2. Do you know that the extended Drin River Basin is a transboundary water system?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3. Do you know that the extended Drin River Basin has been acknowledged as an important freshwater biodiversity hotspot in Europe?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Which of the following services does the extended Drin River Basin provide? Check the extent to which you feel confident of your answer: 1 - Not so sure, 2 - So and so, 3 - Sure, 4 - Pretty sure

	1	2	3	4
Hunting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timber	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genetic resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medicinal plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquaculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Freshwater supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism/Ecotourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious/spiritual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil retention/erosion control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hydrological regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollination for useful plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil purification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water purification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flood buffering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pest prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Species & habitat maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food web maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In your opinion, how serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems? 1-A serious problem, 2-A fairly serious problem, 3-Not a serious problem, 4-Not a problem at all

	1	2	3	4
In your country	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the extended Drin River Basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Europe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Globally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. In your opinion why is it important to protect the extended Drin River Basin? Check how much you agree with the following reasons for protecting it: 1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3- Very, 4: Absolutely

	1	2	3	4
We have a responsibility to look after nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our wellbeing and quality of life is based upon nature and biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The area is indispensable for the production of goods, such as food, fuel, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important for our long-term economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking after nature is essential in tackling climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. For each of the aspects from the following list, please tell me if you think it threatens the extended Drin River Basin and the ecosystem services it provides: 1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-To some extent, 4-Very much

	1	2	3	4
Intensive farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive forestry/deforestation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over-fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution of water by wastewater discharges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution of water by solid waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution of water by pesticides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plants & animals non-native to the region introduced from elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over-extraction of the ground water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of natural areas to other uses e.g. farmland, housing, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modification or fragmentation of the basin by infrastructure works e.g. dams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. In your opinion, in order to protect the extended Drin River Basin, the state should ... Check how much you agree with the following proposed actions 1: Not at all, 2: A little, 3: To s, 4: Absolutely

	1	2	3	4
expand the boundaries of protected areas/zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strengthen existing conservation rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
better implement existing conservation rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
allocate more financial resources to nature protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
make sure that subsidies to agriculture and fisheries also take account of biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
create innovative forms of financing for nature conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
promote research on the consequences of the basins degradation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
better inform citizens about the importance of the basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ensure that biodiversity concerns are taken into account when planning new infrastructure investments in the basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
restore nature and biodiversity to compensate for damage caused by human activities or infrastructure outside protected areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. To what extent do you personally do the following ... Check by using the rating: 1-Never, 2- A few times, 3- Often, 4-Always

	1	2	3	4
Respect nature protection rules existing in the basin e.g. not leaving waste, not disturbing wild animals, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy products that are: eco-friendly, locally produced, organic, with the minimum packaging, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer in actions dedicated to the basin e.g. the Drin Day, clean-up activities, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribute to one or several monitoring projects in the basin e.g. to bird watching, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey!

ANNEX II

The survey contributors

Name	SURNAME	Organization	Country
Romina	BALLA	University of Tirana/ Faculty of Economics, Department of Economics and tourism, graduate, third year	Albania
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