



Living well in harmony with the Drin

www.act4drin.net

Act4Drin Spring School 7-15 May 2016

Join the Act4Drin Spring School 2016 to experience an exceptional blend of collective and collaborative learning on the science-policy-society interface and fascinating field trips in the Drin River Basin



© Milan Vogrin



Act4Drin partners



ACT4DRIN SPRING SCHOOL

The natural wealth and legacy of the Drin River Basin: from field observations and knowledge to collective actions towards protecting freshwater ecosystems



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.

Act4Drin Spring School overview

Students participating in the 9-day Act4Drin Spring School will learn about the fundamental importance of the Drin River Basin for the region's ecosystems, livelihoods and overall well-being. Through [coursework](#), [field visits](#) and [field research](#), students will focus on biodiversity protection and conservation, environmental ethics and sustainable development.

More specifically, students will study the interface between livelihoods and good environmental status; assess freshwater biodiversity and ecological functions; gain an enhanced understanding of the use and governance of natural resources.

The extended Drin River Basin provides countless freshwater habitats to explore, from rivers and lakes to deltas and glaciers.

Through an [interactive](#) and [collaborative experience](#) the significance of biodiversity in fostering collective awareness and strengthened social, economic and spiritual well-being will be highlighted. Students will acquire [knowledge](#), improve their [critical thinking](#) and renew their [motivation to become actively involved](#) in their local communities and national policy processes for the preservation of our natural heritage. Most importantly, they will go beyond 'just learning' and will be 'immersed' in nature, experiencing thus the sense of inner harmony that only nature offers to humans.

In a joint quest for knowledge and through a dynamic and holistic learning process, students will experience sharing [common values](#) for a better future, such as mutual respect and respect for nature, multiculturalism, solidarity, democracy, social responsibility and sustainable development.



Students will visit key conservation sites along the Drin Basin and explore the Drin's natural wealth and legacy; the key threats and pressures imposed such as unsustainable use of water resources; intensive agriculture & forestry; uncontrolled and often illegal fishing and hunting; mining; urban development and unsustainable tourism; extensive solid waste & marine litter issues; uncertainties and risks due to increasing climate variability.

Highlights

Almost ten days of traveling along the Drin River Basin

- **studying** the diverse habitats and livelihoods that are supported by this water body that connects the south-western Balkans.
- **conducting** baseline biodiversity surveys; appraising the status of migratory bird and/or species.
- **assessing** the views and perceptions of local communities along the Drin River Basin on litter and waste; **taking part** in riverine litter surveys.
- **identifying** opportunities and challenges in tourism development while **exploring** selected sites along the Drin River Basin.
- **enhancing** the skills needed to survive in nature (shelter building, food finding, tracking, etc.) and **discovering** its beauties through hikes and nature photography.



The framework

The Spring School is organized 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. The workshop is organized by MIO-ECSDE in collaboration with the project partner NGOs, BIOSFERA, EDEN, GREENHOME and MES.

The Drin River Basin

The Drin lies in the south-western Balkans. Its journey goes beyond borders, through five riparians growing from humble streams to mighty rivers and lakes, travelling hundreds of kilometers towards the Adriatic Sea.

The Drin is a complex living system made of the transboundary freshwater bodies of the Lakes of Lesser & Great Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder; the Drin River, including its tributaries the Black and the White Drin and the Buna/Bojana River.

The Drin is a place where one sees nature in its magnificence, manifested in an astonishing range of habitats from lakes and rivers, estuaries and lagoons, woodlands and forests, freshwater marshes, wet pastures, sandy and rocky shores, alpine meadows and so much more.

These rich and varied landscapes isolated for eons have created the enabling conditions for an eccentric diversity of species to thrive, making this area so special worldwide. Several of these species are rare and many are endemic to the area - they are found nowhere else on earth. Others are threatened and find refuge here.

The intrinsic value of the Drin Basin is priceless – it is beyond doubt one of the most important freshwater biodiversity hotspots in Europe. Whether we realize it or not, freshwater ecosystems, together with every bit of biodiversity they support and the ecosystem services they provide, determine our quality of life and wellbeing. We, as individuals can make the real difference by simply caring, respecting the right of all beings to enjoy this planet and by undertaking individual or collective actions towards safeguarding the biodiversity of the Drin River Basin and its invaluable ecosystem services.

Act4Drin Spring School

7-15 May 2016

Act4Drin School Details

Location	<i>Students will be accommodated in the town of Ohrid; field visits will be made to key sites along the Drin River Basin comprising the sub-basins of Lakes Lesser and Great Prespa, Lake Ohrid, Lake Shkoder/Skadar, the Drin River including its tributaries the Black Drin and the White Drin, the Buna/Bojana River.</i>
Language	<i>English (Proof of good command of English is required).</i>
Dates	<i>Spring 2016: 7 – 15 May 2016.</i>
Deadline	<i>The deadline for submission is 15 April 2016. Early submissions are encouraged. The application form can be found attached.</i>
School costs	<i>All costs including travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses will be covered by the organizers. This automatically entails careful scrutiny of the applicants and full commitment and engagement of the selected students.</i>
Prerequisites	<i>Applicants must be undergraduate or postgraduate students of ecology, biology, environmental chemistry, environmental studies and geography from universities in: Albania, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. One student from Greece and one from Kosovo will also be able to join.</i>
Certificate	<i>At the end of the Spring School students will be awarded a Certificate of Participation.</i>
Pre-assignment	<i>Upon admission to the Spring School students will be asked to prepare a pre-assignment.</i>
Contact	<i>For more info contact Thomais Vlachogianni, MIO-ECSDE Programme Officer & Act4Drin Leader, vlachogianni@mio-ecsde.org</i>

