Notes and Decisions from the third meeting of Inter-Ministerial Council on Waters (IMCW)

Participants:
- Bujar Bukoshi, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairperson of IMCW
- Fadil Ismajli, Minister, Ministry of Economic Development
- Shpëtim Rudi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
- Gëzim Kasapolli, Deputy Minister, Ministry of European Integration
- Marchus Baechler, Director, Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO)
- Baton Begolli, Advisor Water Policies, IMCW
- Afrim Lajçi, Advisor on water regulatory issues (IMCW)

Observers:
- Naser Bajraktari, Director of Water Department, MESP
- Bersant Beka, Political Advisor in the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister Bujar Bukoshi

Welcome by the Chairperson

Deputy Prime Minister Bukoshi, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. He then continued with the topics of agenda.

1. Approval of the Rules of Procedure of the Council

DPM Bukoshi informed that rules of procedure of IMCW was drafted with support of legal office. Some comments were sent to MESP with the delay, which were presented by Director of water department, Naser Bajraktari, on behalf of MESP.

Mr. Bajraktari proposed to remove articles 2 and 3, on the grounds that are regulated by the law of the waters; and to amend articles 5, 6 and 15. After a debate by the participants, the proposals were rejected by the Minister Ismajli and Deputy Minister Kasapolli. Members decided to remove only Article 15.4 “The Secretariat will be supported by Swiss Cooperation Office (as per the agreement with the Government of the Republic of Kosovo) until the end of 2017”, since this issue is regulated with the Agreement between the Government and the Swiss Embassy.

**Decision:** Approved Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Ministerial Council on Waters with the only amendment of removing article 15.4, and shall be forwarded for approval to the Government.

2. Approval of Government Policy on Waters

Advisor Begolli explained that water policy document was requested by actors of the water sector since 2000. Such policy is necessary for the reform of the sector, and development of the
legislative framework and strategy. The draft existed since October 2011 and was sent for approval by the former Chairperson of the Task Force, former Deputy Prime Minister Kusari Lila. Document has been reviewed from the entire donor community and have lobbied for approval. Regional water programs have also expressed interest to see Kosovo adopting the document since in this case and with such a policy we would be ranked among states, most probably the first one in the region. Since institutional responsibilities differ, eg MESP is responsible only for water resources, MED for water services, MH for water quality, etc. it is necessary to have a consolidated policy for the Government. Also, the Prime Minister after a communication exchange with Swiss Ambassador has informed the donors community sector (doc. dated September 19, 2013). The current drought condition makes the policy even more necessary, by ensuring public that the government is proactive in this sector.

Mr. Bajraktari, on behalf of MESP, proposed to be amended the title of document, eg Government objectives in the field of water, or similar.

Minister Ismajli said that the government is not concerned with the realization of the objectives, the Government makes policy, so even IMCW will open platforms and strategic policy options.

After a debate among members regarding Water Policy Document, Minister Ismajli propose to call an extraordinary meeting on this point. Everyone agreed.

**Decision:** Ministerial Council will review the Government's Water Policy at the extraordinary meeting.

### 3. Managing the drought crisis

Minister Ismajli explained that the situation in lakes Batlava, Badovc and Prilepnica is not good at all. The amount of water that can be used from Batlava is 8 million m³, while from Badovc only 2.7 million m³. With these current distribution capacity, there is water for only 4-5 months respectively. While Prilepnica lake has water for 1 unless it is not saved strictly. MED had several consecutive meetings with RWC Prishtina and it is required to compile a plan as soon as possible in order to overcome the situation. The plan is ready and will be distributed to IMCW members. The plan provides short-term and long term investments. Short term plan is activated through campaigns in media and continued through commitment of IberLepenci which acted on several points: regulation of additional hours of reduction, reduction of water mass production, fraud investigation in cooperation with municipality and inspectorate, etc. All Mayors that are affected by this crisis are committed to this issue.

Regarding Prilepnica, the situation is much worse. There is reduction in the quantity of water, the reservoir level is 13.85m (or 16.5m below the max water), which means this situation can provide water only for 1 month. From Gilane water supply we did not received yet any emergency plan to overcome the situation.

Mr. Bajraktari added that in Kosovo there is no dryness, for example in Radoniq there is more precipitate. For Pristina it is noted that the problem is the loss of water. Afterwards he proposed to be added to the proposed group, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development because they make drilling for underground water therefore they can recommended resources in order to overcome this situation.

**Decision:** IMCW shall establish working group chaired by Council Secretariat (Water Policy Advisor) and constituted by RWC Pristina, RWC Hidromorava, RWC Hidrodrini, The Unit for Policies and Monitoring for Public Enterprises (MED), Division for Policies in the Water Department (MESP), Agency for Emergency Management (MIA), Pristina municipality and donors community that will:
- Analyse the situation
• Review proposals for transferring of water from Ujman to Badovc; developing of alternative sources and discharging of some areas of service from lake dependency; implementation of the framework for draught management drafted by Water Task Force; drafting of plans on draught management in RWC; establishing a system of forewarning; awareness increasing of consumers for rational usage; increasing the controls for misuse; cleaning areas of draught; readiness for reaction in case of escalation of situation.

• Inform the Council and Government for situation and measures

• Proposes and undertakes political and technical measures for managing and overcoming the situation.

4. Completion of the Consolidation Process for Regional Water Companies (RWC)

Minister Ismajli took the floor and said that the Government decision 06/18, date 08.06.2011, has requested from Deçan and Kaçanik to return to regional water companies to which they were part of, where point 2 is implemented and Deçani joined respective RWC. The point 3 is almost finalized because the agreement was reached for Kaçanik to join respective RWC. Dpt. Minister Rudi asked for 10 other municipalities, whether they will integrate in RWC. Minister Ismajli answered that by saying that this issue is taken as an obligation from our unit (MED) and from Bifurkacioni and there will be discussions with Municipality Mayor of Shtprce to incorporate in relevant RWC whereas with other municipalities we have cooperation with donors respectively Swiss Office, they engaged to assist and in the phase 5 will assist with investments so that these will be incorporated in water companies. A great commitment was given from the Regulatory Office on Waters.

Advisor Lajçi took the floor and said that there are 10 municipality water companies that are not part of RWC and because of this is proposed that IMCW should establish a working group for implementation of Government Decision for completion of consolidation of RWC which would be chaired by the Secretary of IMCW and composed of representatives of the Unit for Politics and Monitoring in NP of MED, Legal Department and Monitoring of Municipalities of MALG and Regulatory Office for Water and Sewage. This group, after accomplishing consolidation, will terminate its activity.

Mr Bajraktari proposed that Municipality assemblies should be obliged in supporting of this issue especially in consolidating of rural water supplies in RWC. Mr Lajçi said that he agrees completely with Mr Bajraktari since there are around 200 rural water supplies financed by donors mainly and the same are not managed by companies and as a result most of them degraded to that extend that now are not functional. For this reason, a strategy for integration of rural water supplies was drafted and with through this document we are planning to contribute that these water supplies are rehabilitated and the integrated in RWC because integration is the only for sustainability of these rural water supplies.

Minister Ismajli highlighted that it is important to set an objective for example: when, in which year we will be able to incorporate all water supplies in Kosovo, and, it is important that from 7 existing RWC companies to make 4, where of course will have a decrease of unnecessary expenditures and will increase the control over water.

5. Implementation of Administrative Instruction for the Quality of Drinking Water

Advisor Lajçi took the floor by explaining that there is an Administrative Instruction issued by the Government of Kosovo and this AI has made the transposition of European Directive on the quality of drinking water but was not implemented at all. In this AI are included 3 pillars:
- Drafting and approving of technical standards and regulations,
- Internal monitoring of water quality,
- External monitoring and reporting to the Government and KE.

With the intention of this problem to be treated closely, IMCW was proposed to establish an inter-institutional working group, composed of NIPH, Regulatory Office on Water and Sewage, MTI, MESP,

Minister Ismajli required that as IMCW not to deal with issues that are not under our full competences.

6. Other Issues

Dpt. Minister Kasapolli expressed his concerns about the meeting, because other members didn't receive comments on the rules of procedure. Interventions are inconsistent with each other without being able to solve any issue, as was the case with water policy. He proposed that for the next meeting they are informed first and assume competences that belong to them. Dpt. Prime Minister Bukoshi and Minister Ismaili were single-minded.

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