FIRST JOINT ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION
PROVED COOPERATION IN THE WATER SECTOR IS NEEDED AND POSSIBLE

Official opening of the Joint Annual Exhibition on 6 November 2013. Minister of Finance of Kosovo Besim Beqaj, Deputy Minister of Environment of Montenegro Velizar Vojinovic, President of SHUKALB Spartak Kovaçi, Minister of Economic Development in Kosovo Fadil Ismajli, President of SHUKOS Gjelosh Vataj.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S 2014 NEW YEAR MESSAGE

To all of our members, supporters and friends, I want to wish you a Most Happy, Joyous and Healthy New Year in 2014. The continuing success that our Association has had over the past year could not have been achieved without the support, encouragement and willing participation of a wide variety of stakeholders in the water supply and sewerage sector of Albania and the Western Balkans.

- Organized and conducted the first International Conference in Albania on Utility Management under joint sponsorship with the International Water Association.
- Completion of our first Joint Western Balkans Partnership Project under funding from the GIZ Open Regional Fund.
- Organized and conducted the first Joint Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Water Associations of Albania and Kosovo, with a record attendance.
- Developed the final Water Outreach Program of the Association that will take the form of an Annual Science Fair targeting high schools across Albania.

At the beginning of each New Year, we ask ourselves, do we need to do anymore than we did the past year. At that point, I hear my mother’s voice reminding me that we must never be satisfied with yesterday’s achievements, and that we must go “higher and higher”. The Year 2013 was truly a year of higher and higher. In 2013 we achieved, for the first time, the following:

These achievements of 2013, along with the many achievements that have taken place in previous years, have convinced me of one thing, and that is that the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania, and the participants in the Western Balkans Partnership of Water Associations, have the vision, ambition and maturity to move forward without my services as the Executive Director of SHUKALB. Therefore 2014, as I have announced to the Board of Directors of SHUKALB, will be my last year as Executive Director. The Year 2014 will be a year of transition, but not one of lost momentum. A transition plan is being put in place and the Board of Directors will be considering candidates to assume the position of Executive Director to assume the organizational leadership of SHUKALB.

I will reserve my thanks for later in the year, but please believe and understand that I am humbled by the support and validation that all stakeholders have given to SHUKALB over these past 13 years.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2ND JOINT ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2014

VENUE:
TIRANA, ALBANIA

DATES:
6-7-8 NOVEMBER 2014
The First Joint Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania (SHUKALB) and the Water and Wastewater Works Association of Kosovo (SHUKOS) ended successfully, exceeding the targets of its organizers, and more than meeting the professional expectations of the participants involved in the water supply and sewerage sector of both countries and the region.

The Joint event, organized through the cooperation of the Ministry of Development in Kosovo, and with the financial support of the GIZ Water Sector Reform Program in Albania and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo, included 63 speakers and moderators. In addition, 21 private companies took part in the Joint Exhibition held parallel with the Conference. The Conference had over 483 participants from neighbouring countries, as well as numerous EU countries, that joined the three-day event to discuss means to increase the collaboration of the decision makers and stakeholders on the water sector of the Western Balkan Region.

The President of SHUKOS, Mr. Gjelosh Vataj, Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Prishtina, welcomed participants at the Gala Reception held on 6 November. He stated that the Conference represents a good opportunity to deepen cooperation in the water sector and exchange ideas among the countries of the Western Balkans Region. He went on to say, “I wish that this cooperation will continue in the coming years, and will lead to having, in the future, a truly Western Balkan Conference and Exhibition for the water supply and sewerage sector, keeping in mind that these countries are working to fulfil requested standards in their road toward EU integration”.

The Minister of Economic Development, Mr. Fadil Ismajli and the Minister of Finance Mr. Besim Beqaj, who were both present at the Gala Reception, congratulated the initiative to have a Joint Conference. Minister Ismajli made a clear statement saying, “Water has no administrative or state boundaries, which is what makes cooperation not a casual initiative. While the Minister of Finance, Besim Beqaj recognized in his speech the challenges that the water sector faces in the region, and welcomed the joint initiative, calling for further cooperation in facing these challenges.

Present at the Gala reception were also the Minister for Environment of Montenegro Mr. Velizar Vojanović; Coordinator for the World Bank Danube Water Program, Mr. Philip Weller; and other high level professionals working in the water sector.

The Board of Directors of both Water Associations were pleased to have fulfilled the joint Association’s objective in bringing together a broad, regional cross-section of water sector stakeholders to share their knowledge and valuable experiences, with the aim this year to highlight the value of cooperation in a better performing water supply and sewerage sector in the region.

ANNOUNCEMENT

General Assembly Meeting of Members SHUKALB

Date: 7 February 2014
Place: Hotel Mondial
During the two working days (7-8 November) of the First Annual Joint Conference, the Technical Program was focused on the management of water resources, and the overall management of water supply and sewerage utilities, considering aspects such as the regionalization and aggregation of water supply and sewerage services, energy efficiency, wastewater treatment, financial management, and customer services, as well as career development for young professionals in the water sector. Coming from various countries throughout the Balkans and Europe, the participants brought together a broad range of professional backgrounds and experiences.

**Key Session: Five Countries - One Basin**

The first day Plenary Session of the Conference was dedicated to the five countries of Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Greece that share one basin, the Drin River and its tributaries. The session was moderated by Mr. Philip Giantris, the Executive Director of SHUKALB.

The panel for this session consisted of Mr. Ferat Shala, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo; Mr. Alqi Ballak, General Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Albania; Mr. Velizar Vojinovic, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Spatial Planning and Environment, Montenegro; and Mr. Ylber Mirta, Head of Water Sector, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Republic of Macedonia. The discussion of the panelists was focused on the Drin Dialogue and the collaboration among these four countries during these recent years.

**First Day of Parallel Sessions – 7 November**

After the key session, the participants had the possibility to choose between parallel sessions which treated different topics and were organized in different rooms. One of the parallel sessions was moderated by Mr. Baton Begolli and was focused in Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Buildings. The presenters included Mr. Christophe Di Marco, who described GIZ's Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe and the objectives of the program. Mr. Philip Weller, Coordinator of the Danube Water Program, explained how this Program, funded by The World Bank and Austria, and focused on the Danube Catchment Area, would work to strengthen water utilities and water associations within the Danube Catchment. Lastly, Mr. Primoz Banovec spoke on behalf of the EU/IPA funded DRINKADRIA Project, describing it objectives relate to water supply and water resource management for the entire region bordering on the Adriatic Sea and the partneship structure of the Project.

**Parallel to this session,** Mr. Petrit Tare, Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Korca, facilitated the session focused on Water Strategy and Long Range Planning. In the panel were Mr. Jovan Gjika, representative of General Directorate of Water Supply and Sewerage in Albania, who presented the Water Supply and Sewerage Master Plan for Albania. The other presenter in this session was Mr. Naser Bajraktari, Director, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of Kosovo, who spoke on Kosovo's Strategy and Action Plan to 2034.

The next sessions were dedicated to the Water Resource Management. The sessions were chaired by Mr. Ndricim Shani, Director of Technical Services, Valu Add Management Services, Albania, and Mr. Naser Bajraktari, Director, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo.

The first session under Water Resources Management consisted of presentations by Mr. Hazir S. Cadraku, Head of Division of General Water Policy, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo. Mr. Cadraku described the plan for Integrated Management of Water Resources in Kosovo and the institutional structure of the water sector in Kosovo. Ms. Viola Sliaga, represented the Water Resources Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Albania, who presented the progress made to date on the Mati River Basin Management Plan. The last presenter of the session was Ms. Elisabeta Poci, who shared the technical part of her thesis developed during her studies in USA. Ms. Poci described the application of GIS water resources data management technology as applied to historical rainfall data, over an extended period of time, in the Republic of Albania.

The second session regarding Water Resource Management consisted of presentations by Mr. Shuhreta Omegariq and Sabrie Spahiu, Regional Water Company of Prishtina, who shared interesting information related to the water quality of Badovci Lake in Kosovo based on a variety of micro-biological and physical-chemical parameters. Mr. Abedine Azizi, Regional Water Company “HidroMorava”, presented the formation of disinfection by-products (DBP’s) and strategies to reduce their concentrations in the treatment plant in Gjilan. Ms. Fatlije Buza and Lindita Morina, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo, spoke on the measures being taken in Kosovos related to water resource protection.

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CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION PARTICIPATION IN NUMBERS

Participation According to Registration Category

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Participation According to Countries

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Participation in Program Presentations According to Country

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Companies Exhibiting by Country at 2013 Joint Exhibition

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Paralleling the Water Resources Management sessions, there were two other sessions. Mr. Raif Preteni, Director of the Office for Water and Wastewater Regulation, Kosovo, chaired a session that considered Policy and Regulatory Challenges in the Water Sector. In this session, Mr. Baton Begollı presented the value and the goals of Water Task Force in Kosovo. The second presenter was Mr. Radoslav Russev, representing the Water Association of Bulgaria, who provided a review of how the water sector in Bulgaria has developed over the last 10 years. Third presenter was Mr. Avni Dervishi, Chairperson of the Water Regulatory Authority, Albania, who presented an analysis of the performance of the Water Utility Sector in Albania.

The Governance and Management of Water Utilities session was moderated by Mr. Markus Baechler, Director, Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo. Mr. Ramadan Sjediu, Ministry of Economic Development, Kosovo, talked about the Selection, Establishment and Operation of Supervising Councils. Adding to this theme was Etleva Vataj, General Director, Regional Water Company of Prishtina, who spoke to the Technical Assistance to the Water Supervisory Office in Kosovo. Mr. Ramadan Sjediu, focused his presentation on Skills-based Certification. Parallel to this session, Mr. Ilir Abdullahu had an interesting technical presentation regarding Water Loss Reduction and Best Practices. Mr. Genc Lajçi shared the experience of application of GIS at Hidrodrini Regional Water Company. The session ended with a presentation by Mr. Petrit Tare, Director, Water Supply and Sewerage Company of Korca, who presented a detailed analysis of the importance and impact of “smart” water meters, and how efficient water demand management becomes by using those.

Second Day of Parallel Sessions – 8 November

The second Plenary Session of the Conference was chaired by Mr. Gjelosh Vataj and discussed the important issue of the Regionalization of Water Supply and Wastewater Services. Mr. Afrim Ljaci, Water Services Advisor, Water Task Force, Kosovo, shared the experience of the Regionalization of Water Utilities in Kosovo by explaining the history of the regionalization and its challenges and achievements. This was followed by Mr. Philip Giantris, who described the current initiative in Albania toward “water utility aggregation” as part of the Technical Assistance to the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project, being funded by the EU and the Austrian Government.

The second Plenary Session on the second day of the Technical Program was dedicated to Exploring the Potential for Energy Efficiency and Optimization at Water and Waste Water Utilities in Albania. Mr. Hermann Plumm, Director of the Water Sector Reform Program for GIZ in Albania was the moderator of this session. Mr. Fridtjof Behnser and Mr. Pirro Cenko shared the presentation with an Analysis of Four Water Utilities in Albania and the possibilities for Increasing Energy Efficiency. In addition, Mr. Martin Wittmaier, Bremen University of Applied Sciences in Germany, made a presentation on Co-Fermentation of Sewage Sludge, Waste and Substrate from Agriculture as a source for biogas-to-energy.

The program continued with three consecutive sessions dedicated to the topic of Urban Wastewater Treatment, chaired by Dr. Engr. Enkelejdaj Gjinali, Deputy Team Leader of the WASSP Project in Albania, and Mr. Arben Kacorri, Director of Tepelena Water Supply Company. The three presentations in the first session included the Sustainable Management of an Urban Waste Water System, presented by Ms. Arinda Ibrahimlari, Korca Water Supply and Sewerage Company; Performance of the Durres Waste Water Treatment Plant by Ms. Enkeleda Bash, and Performance of the Pogradec Waste Water Treatment Plant by Ms. Brihilda Gjika.

The second session consisted of Mr. Andrew Gialdroni and Dr. Fr. D’Agostino of Chimica from Italy, who described the use of chemicals in pollutant removal in …

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in urban wastewater treatment plants through the use of chemicals. This was followed by Ms. Biljana Nikosavic, Public Enterprise “Waterworks and Sewerage”, Podgorica, Montenegro, who presented on Wastewater Treatment Technologies for Agglomerations < 10 000 p.e. and informed the audience regarding the “Regional Knowledge Network for Better Wastewater Management” GIZ-ORF Project.

Lastly, Mr. Marco Marchisio, Degremont, Italy presented on current Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant technologies, showing the advantages for each technology.

Third session consisted of Mr. Jerdrich Sestak, Sweco Hydroprojekt, Prague, who shared the experience in the use of DAF in the Czech Republic and New Approach in Filter Refurbishment Design. Mr. Damijan Volf, KSB, Lunjana, who informed the audience on Advanced Technologies for Wastewater Transport by explaining some of the technologies and comparing in the investments costs, operations costs and maintenance costs. Lastly, Mr. Daniel Busuito, Wilo International Company, made a presentation on Pumping Technologies for Wastewater Treatment Plants. Parallel to the Urban Wastewater Treatment sessions were three other sessions, on Financial Management of Water Utilities, Customer Service at Water Utilities, and a session dedicated to the issues and concerns of Young Water Professionals.

The Financial Management Session was chaired by Ms. Enังlantina Ajdini. and it included Mr. Sami Hasani, Water and Waste Regulatory Office, Kosovo, who described the Tariff Review and Approval Process for Water Services in Kosovo, to include the Structure and Methodology of Tariffs. Mr. Fadi Berisha, Regional Water Company of Prizren, made a presentation on the Importance of Asset Management in Investment Planning with specific reference to recent investments and the situation of the RWC of Prizren. Lastly, Ms. Elia Pendavinji, Korca Water Supply and Sewerage Company, also addressed Asset Management by explaining the importance of asset management as a tool in the long-term planning of the business.

The session on Customer Services was chaired by Ms. Semira Kasimati, Director of Business Managements Services, Valu Add Managements Services, Albania. Mr. Altin Agalliu and Ms. Ediola Osmani spoke to the importance of Customer Service in a Water Utility by presenting specific examples from the utilities in Berat-Kucove and Korca, respectively. Mr. Taulant Piero made a presentation on Improving Customer Relationships with Customer Care and Billing Solutions.

The Young Water Professionals session was focused on Career Development, and was chaired by Mr. Baton Begoli, Water Task Force, Kosovo. This session was dedicated to the Young Water Professionals that are working on the water sector or are in the beginning of their carriers. Different from the other sessions in the Program, there were no presentations for each panelist, but rather, it was an interactive discussion between two parties, the panelists that were representatives from Water Utilities, University, Donors and Ministries, and the Young Water Professionals.

The panel consisted of the following:
- Ms. Enkelejda Gjinali, Professor Lecturer at the Polytechnic University of Tirana
- Mr. Petrit Tare, Director of the Korca Water Supply and Sewerage Company, Albania
- Mr. Agron Tigani, Director of the Regional Water Company, Peje, Kosovo
- Mr. Ramadan Sejdiu, Director, Ministry of Economic Development, Kosovo
- Mr. Hermann Plumm, Director, Water Sector Reform Program, GIZ Office, Albania
- Mr. Christoph Lang, Deputy Director, Swiss Cooperation Office, Kosovo.

JOINT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, PROCEEDING BOOK AND PHOTOS

At the Joint Conference Website you can find the links where to download the works presented during the Conference and Exhibition of SHUKOS and SHUKALB, photos and the proceeding book.

Presentations:
http://www.balkansjointconf.org/presentations

Proceedings Book:

Photos:
http://www.balkansjointconf.org/conference-photos
To steadily improve on the quality of our Annual Conference and Exhibition, we take “listening to our members and stakeholders” very seriously, and encourage feedback, both positive and negative. Because of this fact, we are presenting below a list of Post Conference Feedback comments that were provided independently by participants.

- One day more would have been better, in order to go deeper into the issues discussed.
- Registration was a bit confusing in locating badges and knowing where to direct my attention. Need larger signs overhead and badges filled in a box in alphabetical order, without straps.
- The idea to make it a regional conference is very positive!
- A longer duration of the sessions, and so also of the presentations, could help to deepen the topics. The organization into parallel sessions lead to the impossibility of following some of the session; and regarding the topics, more technically focused sessions would be advisable, in order to share and strengthen also the technical knowledge.
- Some topics were “business as usual”. Only a few were indeed new or hot topics for Albania and Kosovo. The “new topics” would have benefitted from far more time for real discussion with participants. Panels were not really panels, but just three people sitting there. Too often, sessions were “three questions, sorry no more time”. I would like to have these conferences perhaps more a “specialty shop or boutique”, rather than a big market place. Perhaps that would need a “different format”.
- I missed having a list of participants with contact details. It would be nice to have that at the Conference to actively look for people you want to meet, but perhaps do not recognize. My main comment: “I would appreciate more time to really discuss and dig into certain hot, spicy and new topics.
- In general - very well done. Good combination of local institutions, donors, utilities and private partners. I would recommend next year for a focus to be placed on specific good practices within water operations, as well as matters related to utility financing.
- I wish this cooperation lasts because it is very fruitful for both our countries.
- It was a great experience for me as an intern. I am very confident it will serve for the best of my future.
- Even though there were quality presentations, I think more specific issues and related solutions should be addressed in the future.
- Conferences such as this one should be organised more often.
- Need to more qualitative presentation that are more practical and more related to local issues, with examples of real successes.
- The topics were good ones and contemporary ones. We should be realistic because we have a lot to do for the sector ahead.
- The cultural event at the end of the first day was a good way to make participants relax from a tiring day.
- A certificate should be issued at the end of the event and printed materials of the presentations should be provided.

**POST CONFERENCE FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS**

- Award handed to the best utility employee in Kosovo, 6 November 2013
- Signing of MoU between YWPs of Albania and Kosovo, 6 November 2013
- Social networking event after the first day of Conference, 7 November 2013

**JOINT CONFERENCE SOCIAL EVENTS**

- Award handed to the best utility employee in Kosovo, 6 November 2013
- Signing of MoU between YWPs of Albania and Kosovo, 6 November 2013
- Social networking event after the first day of Conference, 7 November 2013
The Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania has been recently awarded two competitive grants in the framework of the Danube Water Program. The two awarded grants were chosen by the Selection Committee among a very large number of applications for funding submitted to the Danube Water Program by organizations in the eleven (11) different countries participating in the Program.

The first competitive grant aims to develop, in sufficient detail, the Framework and Business Model for a Regional Training Center based in Albania and initially serving the Western Balkans. The philosophy of the Training Center would be to focus on training delivery and not to create fixed assets for training. Working through the Western Balkans Partnership of Water Associations, the Training Center would also screen and select member utilities that could provide facilities and support for practical, hands-on training for specific technologies or management practices.

Exploring the development of contemporary, distance-learning technologies within the Framework and Business Model would be a key element of this grant in an effort to make training accessible and a part of the routine activities of a utility, without having to travel to distant locations. The Center would adapt its courses to suit the local languages of its audience and produce supporting materials in the local language of its audience.

The second competitive grant will develop a formal, fully documented, training course that can be used to strengthen the capacities of national water associations by providing formal training and a reference manual in the preparation of a Five-Year Strategic Business Plan, and the process for the annual review and updating of the Plan.

The outputs of the proposed grant project will be a fully documented training course containing the Trainee’s Manual, the Trainer’s Guide, and the supporting Power Point presentation for the delivery of the training modules. All of the training materials will be prepared in English and they can be translated by the interested associations into their national language.

The total amount of both competitive grants is around 120,000 Euro with a 10% cost-share from SHUKALB. Their implementation will start in the beginning of 2014 with a completion deadline before the end of the year. During the implementation of each of these two projects, SHUKALB will use a portion of the grant funds to involve the Partner Associations of the Western Balkans and also the other water associations in the Danube Region, to play an active role in the activities foreseen by the projects.

A total of sixty (60) students of the Environmental and Hydro-technical Engineering Departments, Faculty of Civil Engineering in Tirana, participated in the Association’s 2013 Summer Internship Program. This Program is the most extensive, organized University student internship program in Albania, and has been operating continuously for the past nine (9) years.

As part of the First Joint Annual Conference and Exposition held in Kosovo in November 2013 SHUKALB was able have these students be present in Prishtina to both attend the Conference, as well as to receive their certificates during a dedication session 8 November 2013.

During the Summer Internship Session at the Conference, the student interns received the certification of their two-month work experiences, where they were assigned. Part of the students shared brief, but emotional, memories of their work experience with the audience during their presentations. On his part, the Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Gezim Hasko, emphasized the link between theory and practice that the Internship Program has created for the Polytechnic University student these 9 years, as a first step towards their professional careers.
In its 7th successful consecutive year, the Children’s Exhibition “Water through the Eyes of Children” was opened to the public for three days during the National Water Week of Albania. The event took place at “FAP” Art Gallery in Tirana during 1-4 November 2013.

The Exhibition is the final step of the Children’s Water Awareness Program “Friends of Water”, which starts in the Spring of each year in 3rd grade classes across Albania, and which is organized annually by SHUKALB for its members, and in its efforts to increase awareness on water issues in children at a young age. The Exhibition presented in total 114 drawings of 3rd grade students from 15 cities across Albania.

Representatives of three key actors of the program officially opened the event on 1 November 2013, including the Deputy Minister of Education and Sport, Nora Malaj; the President of the Water Supply and Sewerage Association, Spartak Kovaçi, and the President of “Teqja” International, Dionis Teqja, as the main sponsor of the Program.

In his speech, Mr. Kovaçi thanked the institutional and financial partners of the program for making it possible to spread essential knowledge on important water issues to the future generations across Albania, and thus planting the seeds in the further development of the water sector in our country. Mr Kovaci said, “The program reflects, in the end, our engagement as professionals and citizens in dealing with such an important challenge as water.”

The drawings were previously evaluated by a Commission composed by representatives of “Teqja International”, a teacher from “Emin Duraku” school, two professors from the Art Academy and Marlin Barleti University, and a professional artist. The Commission selected 12 drawings, as the best ones, based on the messages each of them conveyed. These twelve winning drawings will be the basis for the annual calendar produced by SHUKALB to further raise awareness across different actors in the country regarding the importance of water issues. Students from Tirana, Durrës, Krujë, Korçë, Vlorë, Shkodër and Rërshen were among the twelve (12) winners. Some of winners, accompanied by the Program Coordinator of SHUKALB, Olta Ceca, were invited by Klan TV to take part in their broadcast, “Afternoon Meeting SHOW” to further spread their water awareness messages. The show provided a focused description of the Water Program to the public.

The Children’s Water Awareness Program “Friends of Water”, in 2013, was conducted in 50 elementary schools across Albania, working closely with the science teachers in each school, and involving over 2,500 children at the 3rd grade level. SHUKALB is working to continue to expand the Program to cover all 3rd grade classes in Albania, and invites all water utilities to get involved with the Program as a reflection of their commitment to the communities that they serve.

SHUKALB is both proud and appreciative of the support that it received from over twenty-five (25) water supply and sewerage companies, as well as other institutions and private companies that agreed to host summer interns during the summer of 2013. If your utility, institution or company has not participated in this Student Summer Internship Program, and you would like more information as to how you can get involved, contact Olta Ceca (program@shukalb.al) at SHUKALB for further details and assistance.
The Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania (SHUKALB) offers several programs focusing on water education. Each program intends to increase awareness on water supply issues and engage students in the protection of water resources. The Association currently has well developed programs for 3rd grade and 9th grade students. SHUKALB is recently preparing to introduce a new program for high school level students. The development of this high school program was made possible through the collaboration with two important institutions, the Harry Fultz Institute in Albania and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in the USA. The work for designing this program started in October 2013. The main purpose of this program is to encourage analytic thinking and experimental work amongst high school students.

The Program is particularly important to our Executive Director, Philip Giantris, who graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and has been working to have WPI include Albania among its many off-campus student Project Centers around the world. In the Fall of 2013, WPI sent twelve (12) students to Albania, which operated in three teams, with one of those teams assisting SHUKALB to develop the Science Fair Program. This first effort in Albania was seen as a true success, and WPI is planning to send sixteen (16) students in the Fall of 2014.

The core part of the team was composed by four students from the WPI that visited different schools in Albania, and designed the Program. Each of them worked with students from Harry Fultz High School in developing typical projects to assess what can be achieved in Albania in launching a Science Fair concept. Below, the WPI students speak briefly on their experience working with the students on each of the projects.

**Jean Pierre Miralda**
I worked with a group of six, fourth year students that tested the quality of bottled and tap water in Albania. They visited a water utility company in Tirana, where they were able to work with professionals at the facility and conducted several tests on water such as turbidity, conductivity, pH level, and more. They also considered the cost of each water source to determine which would be the most cost effective for families in Albania. The students were really engaged throughout the project and enjoyed the experience of working in a lab and presenting their findings.

**Gent Mucolli**
The group of Harry Fultz students that worked on the hydropower project consisted of juniors. They chose to work on hydropower because their concentration at Harry Fultz was in electronics. In this project, they imitated free fall using pumps that pumped the water from one tank to another. Using a generator, they produced electricity from the water flow. In conclusion, they related this situation to Albania. Because the country has abundant water resources, they believed that it is a very efficient way to produce electricity.

**Jessica Williams**
I worked with four students that chose to investigate the temperature effect on the quality of water in different types of bottled water. They did this by placing a set of plastic and glass bottles into three different environments: hot, cold, and room temperature. They tested each of the water samples for the presence of unwanted chemicals. The students had a lot of fun working on their project and they were extremely enthusiastic. I think this is a program that has a lot of potential to expand throughout the country.

**Lauren Morse**
My team tested different filters for cleaning water, such as a cloth and coffee filter. They also visited the Bovilla water treatment plant, where they were able to use different filters including a carbon filter and a laboratory filter. The students used water from the Peza River and ran it through these various filters; they then tested the water for clarity and different ions. I really enjoyed guiding the students through their work and it was wonderful seeing how much they appreciated having this opportunity to gain hands-on experience.
“Clean Albania in One Day” was the theme on 22 November 2013, when different groups of volunteers throughout the country gathered to pick up trash in different areas of the country. This was an important joint activity of young Albanians that through their free-will were determined to work towards one cause: make Albania a cleaner and healthier environment in which to live.

Volunteers consisted of high school and university students. The Prime Minister and other officials joined the imitative to clean up the streets of Tirana. Moreover, 700 army troops and 40 vehicles took part in the cleaning process.

Being highly sensible about environmental issues and active in volunteering for over 3 years, the Young Water Professional Group of Albania also joined the initiative. The Chairperson of the Group, Arlinda Ibrahimllari, participated in the advance coordination with the organizers, Green Line Albania, on cleaning areas in Tirana. In parallel, they organized a meeting point with students of the Faculty of Civil Engineering that were interested to join the initiative. At the end, 50 students and YWP’s participated in cleaning initiative on 22 November 2013 to clean the areas of Fusha e Aviacionit and Fusha e Zeze, in Tirana.

The Group successfully managed to gain financial support from the private company IncoWest Albania, and material support from WiFi Albania. Both companies congratulated the young professionals who joined in the imitative, and encouraged them to be part of similar activities in the future.

“We constantly support our YWP’s, but what they achieved on 22 November 2013, as a young, voluntary group meant a lot in terms of self-organization”, said Elisabeta Poçi, the Deputy Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania. “The YWP’s immediately reacted to the call, independently organized themselves, and were able to attract local funding to support their initiative”, said Ms. Poci, and added, “It is impressive how they have become a successful example for change for the younger University students entering the water sector. Through this and other similar volunteering initiatives the young water professional group aims to help change the mentality of young professionals in the country.

The Young Water Professionals Group of Albania provides information and resources, and organizes events aimed to improve networking and career opportunities of young water professionals and students, in order to contribute in the sustainable management of the water sector of Albania. All their activities can be found in their Newsletter and Facebook page.