

DATE:	5 July 2007 from 10h00 till 14h30
PLACE:	Madrid - CEDEX
SUBJECT:	EMWIS STEERING COMMITTEE Meeting n°11 PREPARATORY NOTES
VERSION	2007-06-23
Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclusions of the last meeting, Athens November 2006• Extract from the regional programming of the EU Neighbourhood policy



Regional water financing after 2007

Reminder on the EU regional programming for the Euro-Med area

The regional programming of the EU in Mediterranean fits now in the European Neighbourhood Policy. In this new instrument of co-operation, the water sector is included in a general program on the Environment whose priority initiative is the de-pollution of Mediterranean Sea (the so-called Horizon 2020 Program). The budget allocated for this Environmental program over the period 2008-2010 is 33 M€. The 1st call to proposals is expected in 2008 (9 M€) with contract starting at the end of 2008. It should be noticed that the budget for the period 2011-2013 is not yet defined.

Thus the specific MEDA program for the water sector which had been initiated by the Turin conference in 1999 (Program MEDA-WATER with 40 M€ over 2001-2008) has disappeared. The main reason is that this topic did not seem to be a priority during the governmental discussions with the countries concerned, in particular at the time of the Euromed ministerial meetings.

This underlines the interest to organize a Euromed ministerial conference on water.

Discussion

- Actions to be carried out with respect to the European institutions



Euromed and South-East European water Ministers conference 2008

The objectives of the ministerial meeting

In the light of the major water-related sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean (the fight against poverty, economic development, population movements, improving the environment and health), Euromed and South-East Europe water directors approved the proposal for a meeting of water ministers during their meeting in Athens in November 2006, almost ten years after the adoption of the Turin Action Plan (October 1999).

This meeting needs to have a political content potentially based on:

1. Defining shared regional strategic orientations including adapting to climate change and managing water demand, leading to:
 - a) . The drafting of a new regional programme, coordination of the various existing initiatives and the drawing up of a mandate for the Forum of Water Directors.
 - b) . Funding being optimised as part of the revision of the EU Neighbourhood Policy bilateral action plans in 2009.
 - c) . The merging of bilateral aid from European backers and from multilateral backers.
2. The setting up of a Mediterranean Water Observatory.
3. The drawing up of the Mediterranean contribution to the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009.

In order to do this, updates on the various existing initiatives, particularly the bilateral action plans linked to the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the regional MEDA Water programme, the Mediterranean component of the European Initiative and of the Horizon 2020 initiative, and the Euro-Mediterranean System on the Know-How in the Water Sector (EMWIS), need to be prepared and presented to the ministers.

In particular, the issue of drought (linked to the new EU policy in this area) and the convergence of legislation between EU member states and neighbouring countries, particularly with regard to the Water Framework Directive and marine waters, need to be taken into account.

Preparations for the ministerial meeting

A meeting of the Euromed and South-East Europe Water Directors, to be scheduled by the end of 2007, will set the objectives and decide on the content of the ministerial meeting. The various contributions will also be defined and shared out during this meeting. The meeting could be held in a partner country.

The inclusion of this ministerial meeting into the schedule of Euromed ministerial meetings should be confirmed during the meeting of foreign affairs ministers at the end of 2007. This will require prior discussion with Portugal, as the country will hold the EU presidency during that period. Discussions will need to be started with the subsequent EU presidencies.

The Meeting of Water Ministers must be held before the Meeting of Environment Ministers scheduled for 2009.



Discussions will be carried out with the partner countries able to host the necessary meetings, keeping in mind that all the relevant countries should be able to take part in this meeting.

The following should also be got underway:

- Preparations should be made for the setting up of an international steering committee responsible for defining and implementing the practical preparations for the ministerial meeting.
- A budget and funding plan, taking into account the fact that the remaining budget from the MEDA Water Regional Programme can be used.
- An EU presidency document should be prepared, stating the common position of the Member States.
- Ensure that the regional ENPI programme, the EU neighbourhood policy's financial instrument, reflects the priority initiatives to be validated by the ministers.

Progress

France has presented this note during the last meeting of the European water directors in Dresden on June 18, 2007, and is planning to incorporate this ministerial meeting into its Presidency of the European Union (second half of 2008). The Euromed Committee indicated last January that it would like the meeting to be held at the end of 2008.

Points for discussion

- Objectives of the ministerial conference in 2008
- Preparation
- Financing
- Period and location



Euromed and South-East European water Directors conference 2007

Goal

Following the conference held on November 2006 in Athens, the main goal is the preparation of the Euromed water ministers' conference in 2008:

- validation of the topics which will be included in the ministerial declaration
- Preparation of a draft mandate for the Forum of the Euromed and South-East Europe Water Directors
- Progress of the various regional initiatives
- Action plan for the preparation of the ministerial conference

Date and place

It is planned to organize this meeting in Egypt at the end of 2007. It will be necessary to take account of the incompressible times necessary to prepare the Ministerial meeting at the end of 2008 (elaboration of the documents and consensus between the countries that will require another water directors meeting during the 1st semester of 2008).

The first contacts established with the Egyptian authorities by the Med-EUWI secretariat are favourable, but the decision must be officialised.

Preparation

The financing of this meeting is envisaged within the framework of the contract of the European Commission (Program MEDA-WATER) covering some activities of Med-EUWI.

For reasons of effectiveness, it is proposed that the preparation of the water directors' conference is led by a committee involving 4 countries and the European Commission.

The coordination and secretariat will be ensured as for the conference 2006, by the Med-EUWI secretariat, EMWIS, the MEDA-Water RMSU, the European Commission and the host country, i.e. Egypt.

Discussion

- Comments on the contents, dates and place
- Issues to be improved compared to the last conference



Progress of the feasibility study on a Mediterranean Water Observation Mechanism

Following the decisions taken at the Euromed Water Directors Conference in November 2006 in Athens, the 2nd phase of the feasibility study of a regional mechanism of observation on water was launched.

Today 7 national diagnostic studies (Cyprus, Spain, France, Jordan, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia) have been completed and some demonstration tools implemented to carry out the analysis (catalogue of data sources, web mapping, web portal).

[A experts workshop is organized July the 3 and 4](#) in Madrid to analyze the first findings on priority topics and to define the technical and organisational principles (e.g. items for the draft partnership charter) which could be presented at the next Euromed water directors meeting at the end of 2007. The priority topics selected for the study are:

- Millenium Development Goals related to water and the sanitation
- Water issues, focusing on demand management, of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
- Water supply and sanitation services
- Climate change
- Water scarcity and drought
- Water for agriculture

The main outcome of the experts workshop will be presented during the Steering Committee meeting.

Discussion

- Comments on the study progress



Progress of the working groups envisaged in the program 2007-2010

In 2006, a set of priority topics were defined to carry out activities of transfer of know-how generating of the concrete results in Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) for the period 2007-2010:

- **Participative approaches** in Integrated Water Resources Management
- Prevention and risk management related to the extreme phenomena (in particular the **water scarcity and floods**). For “water scarcity” a unique group will be operated with the EU Joint Process of between EUWI and the Water Framework Directive.
- Non conventional water resources with two sub-topics: the **desalination** and the **re-use of waste water**. For “Waste water reuse” a unique group will be operated with the EU Joint Process of between EUWI and the Water Framework Directive.
- The local management of sanitation services and the prevention of **domestic pollution**
- **water monitoring** in relation with activities dedicated to national water information systems (NWIS) and the study on the regional water observation mechanism

Due to budgetary constraints in 2007, only a few groups have been launched by linking them to other ongoing activities that could finance the organization of meetings. It should be noticed that all these groups belong to the 2nd phase of the Joint Process (MED-EUWI – Water Framework Directive) decided in Athens, Nov’06:

- Re-use of waste water: the group met on 15 March 2007 in Brussels, a 1st report should be available before the end 2007
- Water scarcity and drought: the group met on 19 June 2007 in Seville within the framework of the international Forum on drought organized by Spain
- water monitoring: 1st meeting planned on 3 July 2007 in Madrid within the framework of the workshop on the regional water observation mechanism. The goal is to define a mandate and an action plan

The official participation of the countries in the working groups has not been defined yet for all the groups. This could be done by an exchange of letters between the EMWIS President and the Water Directors of countries.

Discussion:

- Opinion on formalization of the team leaders and working group membership in preparation to funding commitments



Involvement of the European Environment Agency in the EMWIS Steering Committee

The EEA is the EU body dedicated to providing sound and independent information on the environment. Its mandate is

- To help the Community and member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability
- To coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet)

The EEA has a topic center on water and is managing the Water Information System for Europe (WISE: <http://wise.europa.eu>) together with the European Commission and Eurostat. In the framework of the monitoring activities of Horizon 2020 Initiative (i.e. de-polluting the Mediterranean sea), the EEA is in charge of developing a “scorecard” to measure progress with Mediterranean pollution levels.

Some collaboration has been established with the EEA for the new technology of EMWIS web portal (based on the EEA technology used for EnviroWindow) and in the framework of the study for the Mediterranean Water Observation Mechanism.

In this context, a stronger collaboration with the EEA seems valuable for both sides. A first step could be the involvement of the EEA in EMWIS Steering Committee. This membership would ensure the coherency between EMWIS, WISE and EEA activities: better ownership of EMWIS at the EU level as a tool to facilitate the data collection from voluntary non EU countries and to support them in developing national water information systems interoperable with EEA tools.

This involvement could be formalised by the signature of an agreement.

Discussion:

- Opinion on the participation of the AEE in the EMWIS Steering Committee



Co-operation with BALWOIS (Balkan Water Observation Information System)

In order to support the participation of Balkan countries in EMWIS, France is supporting a co-operation initiative with BALWOIS (www.balwois.net). The main goal of this collaboration is to reinforce the exchanges between the two programs so:

- to mutually enrich methodologies and information collection technologies,
- to structure and disseminate information, and
- to identify common topics of activity while respecting the specificities and orientations to each network.

Among the actions planned by BALWOIS in 2007, here are those linked to EMWIS:

BALWOIS Actions for 2007	EMWIS Co-operation
Setting up a Steering Committee	Cross participation in the Steering Committees
Valorization of the knowledge obtained from BALWOIS 2006 conference by drafting syntheses on topics of regional interest	These syntheses could be valuable for EMWIS & Joint Process working groups
Deepening of knowledge on environmental information systems;	Exchanges on structuring water information systems
Hydrometeorological data acquisition - with the support of the WMO - to reinforce the observatory mission	To take into account for the study on the Mediterranean water observation mechanism
Reorganization of the Web site and improvement of the tools	Possible use of the same data structures and interfaces to facilitate exchanges (e.g. syndication)
information collection and updating in order to make BALWOIS a gate on water in Balkans;	Regular exchanges of information (in progress for the news)
Promoting BALWOIS among administrations, decision makers, private sector and NGO for better involvement	Information on the EMWIS
Looking for institutional and financial supports	Exchange of informations
Preparation of conference BALWOIS 2008 27 -31 May 2008 in Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia).	Participation of the EMWIS Promotion for the participation of other Mediterranean countries

Discussion:

- Opinion on the co-operation with BALWOIS

