

10th meeting of the Steering Committee Athens, 06 November 2006

CONCLUSIONS

(2006-11-09)

The tenth meeting of the EMWIS Steering Committee was held in Athens, November 6, 2006 under the presidency of France and the vice-presidencies of Morocco and Lebanon. The whole of the countries and organizations members of the Steering Committee was represented (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Palestine and Turkey) except Israel (justified absences). The meeting was also attended by the EMWIS Secretary General Walter MAZZITTI, by representatives of Greece, lead-country of the Mediterranean component of EU Water Initiative (Med-EUWI), by a representative of the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENDO) as an invited observers, and by the organizations members of EMWIS Technical Unit (CEDEX, OIEau and SOGESID).

The President of EMWIS Steering Committee, Pascal BERTEAUD, opened the meeting by reminding the conclusions of the last meeting of this Committee held in May 2006 in Nice (FR). He also highlighted that even if short after a long day of the Euro-med water director's conference, such Steering Committee meeting is important to maintain a good level of exchanges between its members. Then he introduced the 2 point on the agenda: **2007-2010 financing** and the **organisation of working groups** around the themes defined at the last meeting.

The **funding of the activities planned for 2007-2010** proposed during the Euromed conference of water directors in November 2005 is based on the continuity of the current system and structure:

- Regional activities coordinated by the EMWIS Technical Unit activities, with the support of France, Italy and Spain and the European Union,
- Strengthening of national water information systems for interested partner countries, with the bilateral co-financing support from the European Commission

As indicated during the last meeting of the Steering Committee in May 2006, the suggestion of the Europe Aid service of the European Commission is based on a service contract (i.e. tender procedure) rather than a grant (as it has been done since now). The Water Directors of the Partnership strongly mobilised themselves to inform the European Commission on their will to continue the actions in progress and to work on priority topics in order to lead to concrete results in their country. **Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia** thus **already formulated their needs** to the Commission. It was reminded to the **other countries**, willing to continue this process of institutional exchange of know-how and get further support, that it is the appropriate time to **send a letter to the European Commission**.

An official request for financing was sent by the President to the qualified service of the Commission (Europe Aid) on the basis of the recommendations of Rome conference (Nov. 2005) together with copies of the support letters from the directors, the assessment of the EMWIS activities, a detailed program of activities 2007-2010 and the related budget.



The administrative procedures of the Commission do not make it possible to consider a financing before the end of 2007 or beginning of 2008 (e.g. through a call for tenders or a call for projects covering the EMWIS activities).

In parallel, a full evaluation of EMWIS activities and results obtained is necessary for the further funding procedure with the Commission. This evaluation envisaged during the summer 2006 underwent an administrative delay. It will be held in November and December 2006. The final evaluation report will be available in January 2007. During this evaluation, 4 National Focal points (countries chosen by the European Commission: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia), the Technical Unit and the President of the EMWIS Steering Committee will be interviewed. A survey will be carried out among all the NFP.

In this context, 2007 will be a transition period. A one year extension (Dec'2006-Nov'2007) of the current contract with the European Commission is under signature with a limited set of activities:

- organisation of a Steering Committee meeting and a NFP coordination seminar
- complementing the implementation of local services and web content translation by EMWIS NFP
- maintaining the EMWIS websites and monthly e-news flash, including the dissemination of MEDA-Water results
- complementary feasibility studies with voluntary countries on the regional water observation mechanism

The overall **budget for 2007 is estimated to 770 000 EUR** covered by the EC grant for 400 000 EUR and 370 000 EUR covered by the 3 EU countries of the EMWIS Technical Unit (France, Italy and Spain). It was also mentioned that Greece could join the core group of EU funding countries in the future.

The EMWIS orientations for the period 2007-2010, validated at the last Steering Committee meeting (May 2006, Nice) are based on:

- 3 horizontal priorities:
 - maintaining EMWIS national and international websites,
 - preparing a regional water observation mechanism
 - organising and supporting the Euro-Med Water Directors Forum
- 5 vertical priorities to undertake activities for the transfer of know-how **leading to tangible results** in the Mediterranean Partners Countries (MPCs):
 - **National Water Information Systems** (NWISs)
 - **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**

The first operative rules as well as the potential role and leadership of countries in the different working groups prepared by the National Focal Points and the EMWIS Technical Unit were reviewed. The membership was agreed as follow:

- **Participative approaches** in Integrated Water Resources Management

- *Potential leader country:* Algeria
 - *Potential member countries:* Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey
 - *Potential topics:* Concertation mechanism, Participative approach in managing agricultural water, involvement of the private sector, NGO and local authorities, participative approaches for waste water reuse, awareness raising on the cost of water services
- Prevention and risk management related to the extreme phenomena (in particular the **water scarcity and floods**)
 - *Potential leader country:* Morocco (Water scarcity) – Tunisia (Floods)
 - *Potential member countries:* Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey
 - *Potential topics for floods:* prevention, alert systems and management
 - *Potential topics for drought:* prevention, Early warning & proactive measures to alleviate effects of droughts, water savings, awareness campaigns
- Non conventional water resources with two sub-topics: the **desalination** and the **re-use of waste water**
 - *Potential leader country:* Spain (Desalination) – Jordan/Malta (Waste water reuse)
 - *Potential member countries:* Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia
 - *Potential topics:* Environmental impact, Management of waste water reuse (applications, quality standards), low cost desalination technologies,
- The local management of sanitation services and the prevention of **domestic pollution**
 - *Potential leader country:* France
 - *Potential member countries:* Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia
 - *Potential topics:* Access to sanitation, small communities, legislation, location of sewage stations, governance of services, pollution prevention, delegation of service, monitoring/benchmarking of service delivery

The creation of a working group on “water monitoring” in the framework of the Joint Process was also proposed to complement the activities related to National Water Information Systems and the 2nd part of the feasibility study on the Mediterranean Water Information Partnership (i.e. name proposed for the regional water observation mechanism as a result of the first phase of the feasibility study).

As financial resources will be limited in 2007 for the working groups, the first steps will be carried out remotely with:

- definition of preliminary scope of work for each group
- validation of group leaders and nomination of country representatives

Pascal Berteaud thanks the participants for their active involvement in this meeting after a long conference day. The next meeting of the EMWIS Steering Committee will take place in spring 2007

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