

DATE:	5 July 2007 from 10h00 till 14h30
PLACE:	Madrid - CEDEX
SUBJECT:	EMWIS STEERING COMMITTEE Meeting n°11 ANNEX TO THE CONCLUSIONS
VERSION	2007-07-16

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 agreed, during their meeting in Athens in November 2006, that a meeting of water ministers, almost ten years after the adoption of the Turin Action Plan (October 1999) should be favorably further explored.

The content, scope and modalities of the proposed Ministerial meeting needs to be discussed and elaborated at the coming Euromed and South-East Europe water directors' Conference to take place at the end of 2007. However, the proposed Ministerial meeting is expected, inter alia, to have a political content potentially based on:

1. Defining shared regional strategic orientations including adapting to climate change and integrated water resources management also addressing the challenges of water demand management, water scarcity, droughts and floods, possibly leading to:
 - a) Exploring the modalities and scope for a new regional framework programme on water with a funding pillar that would also aim at complementing and enhancing coordination between the various existing policies, instruments, initiatives and programmes.
 - b) Drawing up of a new updated mandate for the Forum of Water Directors taking into account recent developments.
 - c) Funding being optimised, on the national level, as part of the revision of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENPI) bilateral action plans, in 2009, as well as on the regional level, as part of the regional activities foreseen under the ENPI.
 - d) The rationalisation and better coordination between bilateral (from the EU MS) and multilateral donors, based on innovative or existing tools,
2. Addressing the needs for water-related information collection and management including through 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, progress reports on the status and achievements of the various existing initiatives, e.g. the bilateral action plans linked to the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the regional MEDA Water programme, the Mediterranean component of the European Initiative, the Horizon 2020 initiative, the Euro-Mediterranean System on the Know-How in the Water



Sector (EMWIS) and the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean LME, need to be prepared and presented to the ministers.

Preparations for the ministerial meeting

A meeting of the Euromed and South-East Europe Water Directors, scheduled by the end of 2007, will set the objectives and decide on the content, modalities and venue 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 4th Meeting of Euro-Med Environment Ministers scheduled for 2009 aiming to review progress achieved within the Horizon 2020 Initiative.

The following should also be got underway and addressed at the coming Euromed and South-East Europe Water Directors Conference (end of 007):

- Preparations should be made for the setting up of a steering committee comprising key euro-med partners that will be responsible for steering the practical preparations for the ministerial meeting.
- A budget and funding plan, also exploring possibilities, inter alia, for utilizing part of the remaining budget from the MEDA Water Regional Programme for this purpose (through contributions by activities of relevance to a Ministerial Conference) and other financial resources that could become available.
- 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.



Euromed and South-East European water Directors conference 2007

Goal

Following the Conference held on November 2006 in Athens, the main objective of the 2007 Conference, will be the preparation of the Euromed water ministers' conference in 2008, including:

- Progress review of key regional water initiatives and recommendations for further action. In this respect, for example, linkages between the Euro-Med Ministerial Meetings on Water and on Environment (2009) that will focus on the achieved progress within the 'Horizon 2020' Initiatives should also be explored in view of the operational interlinkages between the 2 Meetings ;
- Discussion and eventually agreement on a proposal for an updated mandate for the Euro-Mediterranean and SEE Directors Forum taking into account recent developments;
- Identification of the topics and main products (declaration, plan of action, etc) of the Ministerial Conference;
- Agreement on an action plan (background, preparatory meetings, partners, etc) for the preparation of the Ministerial Meeting.

Another Conference of the Water Directors should be envisaged before the end of the 1st semester 2008, providing a milestone in the process for the Ministerial Conference.

Date and place

The 2007 Conference is proposed to take place in December 2007, in Egypt. The first contacts established with the Egyptian authorities (Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation) by the Med-EUWI Lead Country and Secretariat are favourable, but the decision has to be officialised as we are now awaiting official positive response by the Egyptian Authorities.

Preparation

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

For reasons of effectiveness, it is proposed that the preparation of the water directors' conference is led by a committee involving Morocco, Egypt and France (voluntary member countries of the EMWIS steering committee), Greece (leader of Med-EUWI) and the European Commission (representative to be decided).

The coordination and secretariat will be ensured as for the Conference 2006, by the Med-EUWI secretariat and the MED EUWI Lead Country Greece, EMWIS, the MEDA-Water RMSU, the European Commission and the host country Egypt.

