

CONFERENCE OF THE WATER DIRECTORS OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

6 & 7 November 2006
Athens, Greece

First call of attendance
(v. 29 June 2006)

Introduction

In November 2005, during the last Conference of the Water Directors of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that was organized in Rome, Italy, under the coordination of the 'Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector' (EMWIS) and the auspices of the Italian Government, it was agreed that the Euro-Med Water Directors' Forum would serve as the institutional platform for the implementation of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) in the region, namely the Mediterranean Component of the EUWI (MED EUWI), which is led by Greece since 2003.

This proposal has been of key importance for the further promotion and implementation of the MED EUWI including its 'Joint Process' linking the MED EUWI with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the Mediterranean, since it signals, inter alia, the identification of a competent body that could, onwards, contribute to and support the future work undertaken in the context of the MED EUWI.

The European Commission (EC/DG AidCo) has also decided recently to financially support, for 2006-2008, a number of specific activities in the context of the MED EUWI's implementation at country level.

In parallel, the Mediterranean Region presents a wealth in various other strategic on-going and new regional initiatives and programmes (e.g. the 'Horizon 2020' Initiative, the new 'European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument', the MEDA-Water Programme, the 'Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development' etc) which are inter-connected and are considerably contributing to the Euro-Mediterranean water agenda.

In this context, **the next Conference of the Water Directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and Southeastern European Countries will take place in Athens (Greece), on 6 & 7 November 2006.**

The Conference will be organized by Greece (Hellenic Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works and Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs), in cooperation with the European Commission, the 'Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector' (EMWIS) and the 'Regional Monitoring and Support Unit' (RMSU) of the MEDA-Water Programme of the EC. The Conference will be technically supported by the MED EUWI Secretariat, facilitated by the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean.



Hellenic Government
Ministry for the Environment
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



EU Commission
DG Environment
DG AidCo



Mediterranean
Component of the
EU Water Initiative



Euro-Mediterranean
Partnership



Euro-Mediterranean
Information System
on Know-How in the
Water Sector



Regional Monitoring and
Support Unit
MEDA-Water Programme

Agenda

The Conference will review and discuss priority issues of the Mediterranean water agenda, with an emphasis on the recent developments, the state-of-play and the next steps of:

- The **Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative** (MED EUWI),
- The **Joint Mediterranean Process** (Joint MED EUWI/WFD Process), linking the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) with the MED EUWI, including reference on the recent political EU Initiative on 'water scarcity and droughts' ,
- The **Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector** (EMWIS),
- The **Euro-Mediterranean Regional Water Programme for Local Water Management** (MEDA-Water Programme),
- The **Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment** (EU Marine Strategy),
- The recently launched Initiative by the EC to De-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by year 2020, namely the '**Horizon 2020**' Initiative for the Mediterranean,
- The new **European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument** (ENPI), and in particular its perspectives in the Mediterranean,
- Other on-going Initiatives and Programmes in the Mediterranean region coordinated and promoted by international and/or regional Organisations, including the **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, GEF Strategic Partnership**), etc
- In this respect, the potential building up of a regional water observation mechanism supporting the followup of regional water activities and the implementation of national water policies, will also be addressed.

A detailed Agenda of the Conference will be available in due time.

Objectives

The Conference aims to:

- Contribute to the implementation of the MED EUWI including its 'Joint Process'. The Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors will be informed on the progress achieved since 2003 in the context of the MED EUWI, including its 'Joint Process', with a view to foster a fruitful discussion and exchange of views on the required next steps to further promote implementation of MED EUWI on country level. In particular, Water Directors will be invited to provide advice and guidance, inter alia, on the second phase of the 'Joint Process' (2007-2009), and on further implementation of the 'National Country Dialogues' process initiated within MED EUWI, in late 2005. In addition, ways to promote synergies with other on-going processes and to maximize the benefits from the expected results will be discussed.
- Review progress within the main (i.e. 'Horizon 2020', MEDA-Water Programme, EMWIS, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, EU Marine Strategy, GEF Strategic Partnership) parallel on-going Initiatives and Processes in the Mediterranean, related or focusing on water issues, with a view to further promote their inter-linkages and synergies, aiming to their more effective coordination, thus, setting the basis for the design of concerted activities and future joint action. In particular, effort will be made to explore and enhance linkages with new 'umbrella' Initiative of the EC for the Mediterranean 'Horizon 2020' as well as with the ENPI.

In this respect, the 3rd Conference of the Euro-Med Water Directors Forum will also serve as an informal preparatory opportunity for the 'Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Ministers of Environment', planned for 20 November 2006, to be organised in Cairo, Egypt, by the EC and the Finnish Presidency. Moreover, the perspectives and opportunities for the organisation of a special 'Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Water' will also be addressed and discussed.

Participants

The 35 Water Directors of the countries and the European Commission participating to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will be invited to participate. The Water Directors of Southeastern European countries and Libya will also be invited to participate as observers. Furthermore, representatives of the key regional Organisations and Networks, NGOs, representatives of the donor community, IFIs, etc will be invited as observers.

Working Languages

Working language of the Conference will be English and French. Simultaneous translation will be provided to and from both languages.

Venue

The Conference will take place in the center of the city of Athens, Greece. Information about the exact Conference site, together with related practical information, will be transmitted shortly.

Accommodation

Special rates for the participants will be arranged in selected hotels near the Conference venue. Hotel names and contact details will be transmitted soon together with other practical information regarding the Conference.

More Information

Official initiations to participants together with the Preliminary Agenda and Registration Form will follow shortly, via e-mail and regular post. Further announcements with background documentation, detailed information and practical issues about the organisation of the Conference will be transmitted in due time to participants, via e-mail. Related information will also be uploaded on to the URLs: www.minenv.gr/medeuwi/ and www.emwis.org.