

**EMWIS Steering Committee
Madrid meeting
July 5th 2007**

Decision for a concrete contribution by EMWIS to the organisation of the conference of the water ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean and South-eastern European countries

With regard to the major stakes of sustainable development linked to water in the Mediterranean region (fighting poverty, economic development, movement of populations, improving the environment and health) and the need to adapt policies in the face of climate change, the water directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and South-eastern European countries, meeting in Athens in November 2006, approved the principle of a conference of ministers in charge of water, ten years after the adoption of the Turin action plan.

This decision was taken with the following objectives:

- Taking into account the vital questions concerning the policies of management, protection of water resources and water services, taking into consideration the efforts made and the progress achieved,
- Preparing priority actions where implementation should be pursued,
- Pursuing and reinforcing the interaction between water directors and between these directors and the competent authorities and the stakeholders,
- Introducing better co-ordination of all the processes developed in the field of water in the region, particularly in the framework of European neighbour policy.

The principal existing processes are as follows:

- Euro-Mediterranean partnership, known as the “Barcelona” process: Initiative Horizon 2020 for the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, the Euro-Mediterranean regional programme for local water management (MEDA-Water), EMWIS, Mediterranean element of the European water initiative, joint process of this element and the framework directive on water, Mediterranean water observatory,
- Action plan for the Mediterranean: Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy, prospective studies carried out by Plan Bleu.

Decision of EMWIS Steering Committee:

France foresees to organise the conference of the water ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean and South-eastern European countries planned end 2008 under its EU Presidency.

EMWIS will make a contribution to the preparation of this conference in the form of an expertise aiming to:

- Draw up an inventory of the different existing processes after meetings with their executives and beneficiaries,
- Seeking greater efficiency, particularly in reaching the Millennium Goals in the region, draw up strategic recommendations and the most operational as possible action plans covering the following fields:
 - Impact of climate change on water resources (prospective studies)
 - National and regional information systems and tools for exchange of know-how and good practices,
 - Evaluation of water resources that can be mobilised (conventional and non-conventional)
 - Integrated water resources management by catchments area, taking into account the necessary reinforcement of water demand management,
 - Taking water into account in sectorial policies - in priority for the agricultural, industrial and tourism sectors, ,
 - Governance and efficiency of water and water treatment services,
 - City networks and decentralised “water and sanitation” co-operation,
 - Optimisation of financing instruments and development of innovative financing mechanisms,
 - Introduction of technology clusters and technological development,
 - Training and capacity building
 - Pollution of water bodies, specially groundwater
 - Water and biodiversity,
 - Wet lands,
 - Energy print of the infrastructures related on water and the sanitation.

To achieve this, France will provide an expert and will cover the corresponding costs. Its work will be carried out under the responsibility of a Pilot Committee involving representatives from 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).

Work on this will be started as rapidly as possible, so that a preliminary presentation of this can be made at the meeting of the water directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and South-Eastern European countries planned for December 10th and 11th 2007, in Alexandria, Egypt (to be confirmed).