

4th CONFERENCE OF THE WATER DIRECTORS OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

10 & 11 December 2007
Alexandria, Egypt

First call of attendance

(v. 20 August 2007)

Introduction

The 3rd Conference of the Water Directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and Southeastern European Countries was organized in Athens, November 2006, and provided the opportunity to review major regional water-related initiatives and processes. It was the first time that all such processes were presented and discussed by the Water Directors Forum. The Athens Conference reached an important set of Conclusions and related recommendations for action and for further promotion of synergies among key water-related Mediterranean policies, initiatives and programmes.

The Conclusions of the Athens Conference were consequently submitted to and taken into account at the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of the Ministers for Environment, 20 November 2006, in Cairo, thus enhancing linkages between the various water-related initiatives, such as the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI), with the Horizon 2020 Initiative and the European Neighborhood Policy. The results of the Cairo Ministerial Meeting were presented at the Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 28 November, in Tampere.

Among the outcomes of the Athens Conference was the recommendation that *"almost 10 years after the Turin Conference, the organization of a special Euro-Mediterranean and Southeastern European countries' Ministerial Conference on Water should be favorably further explored"*. The proposed Ministerial Conference will provide Ministers in charge of water in the Euro-Mediterranean and Southeastern European countries, with the opportunity to address major policy issues related to water resources management, protection and services. Taking into account the efforts undertaken and progress achieved in the region and considering the global context of climate change, the Ministerial Conference could propose, inter alia, concerted priority actions to be further implemented.

In addition, 2007 was marked by the substantial advancement of several programmes and initiatives in the Region, such as the implementation of in-country and regional level activities within the MED EUWI; the launching of the second phase of the Joint Process linking the MED EUWI with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) with the operationalisation of 2 new Working Groups; the concrete setting of the 'Horizon 2020' Initiative with a governance structure and a timetable until 2013; the definition of the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) modalities; the implementation of the last phase of projects within the MEDA Water Programme and the enhancement of their coordination; the approval and launching of the inception phase of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems, the tangible progress achieved by the African Water Facility, etc.

In accordance with the abovementioned, **the 4th Conference of the Water Directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and Southeastern European Countries will take place in Alexandria (Egypt), on 10 & 11 December 2007.**



Hellenic Government
Ministry for the Environment
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



EU Commission



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

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

Agenda

The Water Directors' Forum Conference will review and discuss priority issues of the Mediterranean water agenda, with an emphasis on their recent developments, their state-of-play and their next steps also in view of the proposed Ministerial Event and will agree on a way forward. Analytically:

- 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 EC Initiative to De-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by year 2020, namely the '**Horizon 2020**' Initiative for the Mediterranean;
- The **European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument** (ENPI), and in particular its perspectives in the Mediterranean;
- The **Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment** (EU Marine Strategy);
- The **Euro-Mediterranean Regional Water Programme for Local Water Management** (MEDA-Water Programme);
- 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 for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems, African Water Facility**, etc.

One of the key elements of the coming Water Directors' Conference will also be the preparation and organization of the proposed **Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water**, planned to be held almost ten years after the Turin Ministerial Conference. Fostering discussions and reaching of decisions on the objectives, content, modalities, venue, possible contributions and required political background will ensure a successful Ministerial Conference.

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

Objectives

In more detail, 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 2006 in the context of the MED EUWI, with a view to foster a discussion on the required next steps to further promote implementation of MED EUWI on country level. In particular, Water Directors will be presented, inter alia, with the first set of concrete results from the 'Country Policy Dialogues' process initiated within MED EUWI in Lebanon and Egypt and will be invited to provide advice and guidance on further implementation of this process. The MED EUWI Work Plan 2008 will be also presented for review and adoption. Moreover, the Water Directors will be informed on the initial outcomes of the second phase of the 'Joint Process' (2007-2009) and the actions foreseen in 2008. In addition, ways to promote synergies with other on-going processes and to maximize the benefits from the expected results will be discussed and explored in practice.

- Serve as an informal preparatory opportunity for the proposed Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water by identifying key topics and main products (declaration, plan of action, etc) as well as agreeing on the preparatory process (background, preparatory meetings, partners, etc) for the organisation of the proposed Ministerial Conference on Water. In this respect, linkages should also be secured with the forthcoming Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Environment (2009) that will focus on the achieved progress within the 'Horizon 2020' Initiative. Furthermore, an assessment of the co-operation in the water sector, in the Mediterranean, and a first proposal for potential action lines for regional cooperation will also be discussed.
- Inform, discuss and assess progress achieved by other key water initiatives and processes in the Region and provide recommendations for further action in view of the proposed Ministerial Conference on Water, with a view to substantially contribute to an enhanced coordination and complementarity of all key water-related activities and initiatives, i.e. the 'Horizon 2020' Initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean by 2020 with its 3 Sub-Groups on 'Pollution Reduction, 'Capacity Building' and 'Monitoring'; the 'European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument' and its set priorities at national and regional level; the 'Euro-Mediterranean Information System on Know-How in the Water Sector' (EMWIS) and related activities on water data, the 'MEDA-Water Programme'; the 'Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development'; the 'GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean' and the 'African Water Facility'. The Water Directors will be also informed on the results of the the UNEP/MAP-Blue Plan Workshop on water demand management held in Saragossa, March 2007, as well as the preparations for the 5th World Water Forum, Istanbul 2009.
- The potential building up of a regional water observation mechanism supporting the follow up of regional water activities and the implementation of national water policies, will also be addressed.
- Discuss and eventually agree on an updated mandate for the Euro-Mediterranean and SEE Water Directors Forum, taking into account recent developments in the Region.

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 Alexandria, Egypt. 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

The Preliminary Agenda will follow shortly. 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.net.