

EMWIS STEERING COMMITTEE

Composition and activities

(2001-2005)

Version dated 2005-11-02



I) THE STEERING COMMITTEE

In May 2004, the Steering Committee membership rules have been reviewed to give an opportunity to all the Mediterranean Partner Countries –MPC- to take part in this Committee and thus reinforcing their high-level commitment. The Steering Committee is composed of the Water Directors of 10 countries:

- 3 permanent members corresponding to the country committed in the funding of the EMWIS Technical Unit (which constitute the core of the Management Committee),
- plus 7 members representing at least 4 Mediterranean Partner Countries, with the possibility of rotating every 2 years

The Steering Committee meets once a year with alternate organization of the meetings.

A representative of the European Commission is invited to attend the annual Steering Committee meetings.

All the other countries of the Euro-Med Partnership can attend the annual meetings as observer. In any case the all the Water Directors are receiving the conclusions of the meetings.

The organisations who have signed a partnership agreement with EMWIS are invited as observers to the annual Steering Committee meetings.

The Steering Committee is responsible for:

1. Defining the main strategic orientations.
2. Validating the results obtained in each phase.
3. Validating EMWIS annual action plan and budget proposed by the Coordination Committee.

Currently, the Presidency is held by Spain and the Vice-presidency by Cyprus.

II THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Since the renunciation of The United Kingdom in 1998, the steering committee is composed of 9 members:

- Algeria
- Cyprus (Vice president)
- France
- Italy
- Jordan
- Malta
- Morocco
- Palestinian Authority
- Spain (President)



Countries of the European Community members of the Steering Committee are those involved in the financing of the Technical Unit.

Currently, the presidency of the Coordination Committee is held by Morocco and Vice-Presidency by Malta. This Committee involves all the NFP coordinators and meets once a year.

III) ACTIVITES

EMWIS Steering Committee has met three times since the end of 2001:

- 6th meeting - Rome (Italy) 17 September 2002
- 7th meeting -Malta 4 May 2004
- 8th meeting - Athens, 23 June 2005

IV) CONCLUSIONS

6th meeting of the Steering Committee - Rome (Italy) 17 September 2002

The sixth meeting of EMWIS Steering Committee took place in Rome (Italy) on 17 September 2002 under the presidency of Italy and vice-presidency of Jordan. All the countries and member organisations of the Steering Committee were represented (Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Spain and the Palestinian Authority) at the exception of the European Commission (justified absence).

The Italian Sub-Secretary of State from the Ministry of the Environment and Regional Planning, Mr. Roberto TORTOLI, opened the meeting. In particular, he reminded that EMWIS is important for co-operation in the Euro-Mediterranean area. He emphasised that the System is to-day a real tool which meets tangible needs of information streamlining and exchange for the development of new co-operation projects. Mr. TORTOLI thanked Mr. Walter MAZZITTI for his very active support as first President of the Steering Committee since the beginning of EMWIS up to its operational phase, including several Ministerial conferences. He then declared that the new Presidency, fulfilled by Spain, a good partner of Italy, will allow the strengthening of EMWIS's real example, not only in the region but also at the international level. Mr. TORTOLI finally reminded the commitment of the Italian government to EMWIS. He expressed its will to continue its support in the next phase.

Following this welcoming address, the session Chairman, Mr. MAZZITTI, underlined the very encouraging results of EMWIS, especially the commitment of the Mediterranean Partner Countries. To-day, 13 of the 20 National Focal Points–NFPs- already created, have an effective website (Algeria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Spain and Turkey). Lebanon and Tunisia should also launch their national website in the near future.

The declarations of interest of the main international initiatives in the water sector, presented during the Madrid meeting in November 2001, underline the importance of EMWIS at the world level. Thus, during the last General Assembly of the International Network of Basin Organisations –INBO- which took place in Quebec in May 2002, INBO and EMWIS signed an agreement to co-operate with a view to



improve the gathering and dissemination of information and documentation on integrated water resource management inside their respective partnerships. INBO will, in particular, support EMWIS in the creation of a section on water management at the scale of river basins in the Mediterranean countries and will mobilise its partners for this purpose. This section will foster the concepts of water management at the scale of river basins and experiences developed by INBO members and especially those located in the Mediterranean basin. Each network will favour the dissemination of information coming from the other network.

Mr. MAZZITTI then officially transferred the Presidency of the Steering Committee to Mr. Juan CANOVAS-CUENCA, President of the Segura River Basin Agency, emphasising his confidence in the new Presidency to meet the new challenge which is the second phase of EMWIS.

Mr. Juan CANOVAS thanked the Italian Government for the warm welcome given to the members of the Steering Committee and for its past and future support to EMWIS. He also reminded the commitment of the Spanish Government to the second phase of EMWIS.

The new President expressed his thanks for the work carried out by W. MAZZITTI and proposed to create a position of honorary president for Mr. MAZZITTI in order to continue benefiting from his great skill in this field. This proposal was unanimously accepted by the members of the Steering Committee. Ms Suzan TAHA, who represented Jordan, then gave a gift to Mr. MAZZITTI on behalf of His Excellency the Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation, Dr. Hazim EL-NASER.

The members of the Steering Committee approved the following documents:

- > Progress report and implementation of National Focal Points
- > Financial report and estimate

The organisation of two out of the three promotional seminars was confirmed. The first one will take place in Amman on next 22 October with, hopefully, the participation of Egypt, Cyprus, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. The second one will be held in Tunis in December, the final date will be set with the Tunisian authorities. The third seminar, planned for in Morocco, had to be postponed due to the on-going restructuring of the Water Department of the Ministry of Public Works (EMWIS's NFP), and especially of its information system. The Moroccan representative proposed to postpone this event to the Spring of 2003, during the second phase of EMWIS. The President of the Steering Committee will propose Turkey to organise a similar event before the end of year 2002.

The Palestinian representatives requested the Technical Unit to see if the organisation of an information day for the Water stakeholders in Palestine would be possible, provided that the field situation enables it. The participants reminded the importance of EMWIS as an effective regional project involving all the countries of the Middle East peace process.



The three organisations which participate in the Technical Unit (CEDEX, IOWater, SOGESID) presented their viewpoint on the first phase of EMWIS. They especially showed their satisfaction in the realisation of ideas given during the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of Marseilles in 1996 and the good co-operation between their respective organisations. They also reaffirmed their will to meet together the challenges of the second phase of EMWIS, with in particular the progressive change of the NFPs into national water information departments, to continue the present services and the necessary mobilisation of the users and partners.

The discussions then focused on the preparation of the second phase of EMWIS. The participants expressed their regrets that the European Commission was not represented. The letter sent by Mr. PAPADOPOULOS, head of unit at the office of EuropeAid Co-operation (B/3), following the preparatory meeting of the Commission and the three countries of the Technical Unit (Brussels, 9 September 2002) was applauded. This letter confirms the positive outcome of the technical evaluation and of the 'monitoring' assignment of the first phase.

The proposals for widening the strategic plan, adopted in Madrid as regards the preparation of the second phase, were examined one by one. Three out of the six proposed points generated comments, the others were unanimously approved:

- Widening of EMWIS skills so that the Technical Units can provide a 'customized' support to the development of national water information systems. It was noted that EMWIS should not have an intrusive role: need should arise through the NFPs, the Technical Unit then responds to countries' request. The notion of water information system is very large. Therefore, one of the first actions should aim at better defining this concept while remaining in line with the basic objective of EMWIS which is to improve local water management through the exchange of know-how. It was agreed that the paragraph relative to this point should be revised to stress the fact that this widening will be analysed on a case by case basis, upon the request of each Mediterranean Partner Country (see the final version of the widening proposals).
- Regarding the incorporation of the Arabic language in the system, it was underlined that the choice of vocabulary should be paid particular attention as significant variations exist between Maghreb and Machrek. The use of a neutral vocabulary such as the one defined by the League of the Arabic Language should be useful.
- Improving co-operation with the MEDA-Water programme. The members of the Steering Committee reasserted their will that EMWIS be the preferred vector for disseminating the information on this programme. However, the practicalities should be defined with the European Commission which is the official source of this information.

The Steering Committee mandated the President and the Technical Unit with the reformulation of the strategic plan, the preparation of a detailed action plan proposal and corresponding budget to obtain an agreement between the countries which finance the Technical unit and the European Commission before the end of 2002.



The 'widened' Strategic Plan will be sent to the Water Directors of all countries of the Partnership, while proposing to the European Union countries the possibility of joining Spain, France and Italy and becoming partners of the Technical Unit.

At last, regarding promotion, it was agreed that the members of the Steering Committee should inform their Ambassadors in the Euro-Med Committee of the EMWIS progress and of the importance of the water sector in the Partnership. The President and the Technical Unit will propose an information document to the members of the Steering Committee to assist them in this action.

Mr. Juan CANOVAS closed the meeting and thanked again the former President and the Italian Government for their welcome.

7th meeting of the Steering Committee -Malta 4 May 2004

The seventh meeting of EMWIS Steering Committee took place in Malta on 4 May 2004 under the presidency of Spain and vice-presidency of Cyprus. Most of the country members of the Steering Committee were represented (Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and the Palestinian Authority) at the exception of Algeria and Jordan (justified absence). The meeting was also attended by a representative of the European Commission EuropeAid Coordination Office and by the organisation members of the EMWIS Technical Unit (CEDEX, OIEau and SOGESID).

After the welcome address of the Steering Committee President Dr. Juan CANOVAS, Dr John MANGION (Water Director, Head of water department of the Malta Resources Authority) reminded the participants about the high value of sharing knowledge and experiences among the Mediterranean countries, all facing water scarcity problems. He added that EMWIS must play the role of a network of Excellence facilitating the transfer of know-how among Euro-Med water institutions.

These introductory speeches were followed by the review of the activities carried out in 2003. The main issue was the important administrative delay (11 months) for signing the European Commission's contract covering the activities of the phase II. It resulted in a lack of financial resources and difficulties in planning concrete activities. But thanks to the joint support of France, Italy and Spain, a minimum set of actions have been developed before the signature in December 2003:

- Promotional activities with various presentations made during international events, including the 3rd World Water Forum
- Completion of actions launched at the end of 2002
- Maintaining EMWIS information services running
- Keeping (electronic) contacts with the EMWIS National Focal Points
- Preparation of the new contract with the European Commission

It was reminded that out of 27 countries signatories of the Euro-Med Partnership, 20 have nominated a National Focal Point, 17 have taken part regularly in EMWIS meetings and 14 have launched their EMWIS national web sites. Due to the lack of

joint activities in 2003, the level of commitment has decreased, but most of the NFP have maintained effective links with the Technical Unit.



With the EU enlargement, the Euro-Med Partnership counts now 35 countries: 25 from the EU and 10 Med Partner Countries. The various promotional materials and the EMWIS websites will have to be updated. But this will not affect significantly the contractual budget for the 2nd phase that is mainly providing support to the Med Partner Countries. The potential entrance of Libya into the Euro-Med Partnership in 2005 was also noted, this would require some budget adjustments for EMWIS phase II contract.

The statement of account for 2003 (223 563 EUR) and the budget for the period December 2003 – November 2006 (3 332 420 EUR) were validated by the members of the Steering Committee.

The [work programme for the period December 2003 – November 2006](#) was reviewed. This programme is based on the strategic plan adopted by the Euro-Med water directors in Madrid in November 2001 and on the technical evaluation of the Phase I contract (1999-2002). It was reminded that the evaluators highlighted that EMWIS should support the development of National Water Information Systems, should link with the water related initiatives in the Med area and should foster the ownership of the system in each country.

In order to reinforce the level of national commitments and the transfer of ownership despite of the overall delay, it was decided to move forward the meeting of the 35 Euro-Med Water Directors, originally planned at the end of 2005, to around March 2005. In addition, the President of EMWIS Steering Committee will inform by letter:

- > The Euro-Med Ministers in charge of water about EMWIS status, the national commitments taken in Naples in 1997 and the objectives of phase II.
- > The Euro-Med water directors on the conclusions of the 7th Steering Committee meeting and the importance of the Ministerial commitment to involve all the national water stakeholders (including the civil society) in the development of water information systems.

The President and honorary President might also take direct contacts with the Ministers and Water Directors when difficulties will be noticed.

The members of the Steering Committee welcomed the actions planned for reinforcing the National Focal Points. They proposed a brief survey on NFP needs and current problems (including self evaluation) to be carried out in May and June. On this basis, the themes of good practices case studies will be selected during the Coordination Committee meeting planned in early July in Morocco. The Steering Committee members also required the development of specific work programmes and monitoring tools for each of NFP to better focus the future aids.

An extensive discussion took place for topical studies to be carried out. All the members pointed out that in parallel to the five EMWIS topics (institutions, Documentation, Training, Research and development, Data administration), it is necessary to focus on more specific themes of interest for the Med region. On the basis of the Ministerial Turin Action Plan (October 1999) and suggestions received from the EMWIS community, some 15 themes have been proposed. During the



meeting additional relevant topics such as impact of climate changes on local water management, public-private partnership or water demand management were discussed. Finally, it was decided to start working on four themes, with the aim to get significant results on at least 2 of them for the meeting of the Euro-Med Water Directors in early 2005. These studies will provide synthesis of concrete field experiments:

- Use of non-conventional water resources (theme of the Turin Action Plan)
- EU Water Framework Directive and the Mediterranean Partner Countries: identification of interest and transfers of success cases of the WFD implementation in EU countries to the MPC
- Irrigation water management (theme of the Turin Action Plan)
- Integrated management of local drinking water supply, sanitation and sewage (theme of the Turin Action Plan)

For the three themes of the Turin Action Plan, significant contributions are expected from the nine projects launched in the framework of the Euro-Med regional programme on local water management.

The promotion plan was then presented and agreed. It focuses on four target groups: NFP, 'consumer of water information', water information providers and decision makers. It was reminded that NFP themselves should play an active role in communication activities at the national level to promote the ownership by national politicians and ensure a wide participation of national water stakeholders. The paper promotional documents (i.e. updated brochure, annual newsletter, and phase II leaflet) will be produced in Arabic, English and French. It has also been noticed that potential TV spots in collaboration with Mediterranean channels, Euro-News or BBC-World could be further investigated.

The Steering Committee membership rules have been reviewed to give an opportunity to all the Mediterranean Partner Countries –MPC- to take part in this Committee and thus reinforcing their high-level commitment. It has been agreed that:

- The Steering Committee is composed of 10 members:
 - 3 permanent members corresponding to the country committed in the funding of the EMWIS Technical Unit,
 - plus 7 rotating members representing at least 4 Mediterranean Partner Countries
- The term for renewable members will be 2 years. Each year a maximum of 2 members will be renewed
- The term for the Presidency will be 4 years and 2 years for the Vice-Presidency
- To apply, the water Director of a candidate country will have to send an application letter to the Steering Committee President. At their annual meeting, the Steering Committee members will validate the membership renewal on the basis of a fair representation of Mediterranean sub-regions.



Countries not represented in the current Steering Committee will be informed about the opportunity to join it. The next Steering Committee meeting will review the applications received and will decide on outgoing and incoming countries.

The collaboration with international initiatives has a high priority for the second phase of EMWIS. The goal is to give a full picture of the main stakeholders around the Mediterranean and to provide access to their information resources (or developing new ones) while promoting their initiatives. Such agreements have been already signed with:

- the International Network of Basin Organisations –INBO- with a specific attention on integrated water management at the level of river basins in Med countries. Actions are currently under development with the MENBO (Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations)
- the Mediterranean Water Institute for promoting regional cooperation projects (e.g. Euro-Med regional programme on local water management)

The participants reminded the importance of EMWIS as an effective regional project involving all the countries of the Middle East peace process. Walter MAZZITTI, Honorary President of the EMWIS Steering Committee and water expert of the EU Task Force for the Middle-East Peace process, proposed to present EMWIS and WaterNet to the 25 EU countries during one of the future meetings of the EU Task Force in Brussels. This would be a good opportunity to promote EMWIS activities and to prepare concrete cooperation between two major initiatives involving Middle-East countries (Israel, Jordan and Palestine for WaterNet and Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria for EMWIS). Steering Committee members agreed on the organization of this meeting in Brussels.

Finally, the President has been mandated to prepare and sign agreements with the relevant initiatives (with a priority on those directly involved in the Mediterranean area). NFP will be invited to prepare similar agreements at the national level to provide access to information resources, for example developed by universities or research centers.

The President, Mr. Juan CANOVAS, closed the meeting and thanked again the Maltese Resource Authorities for their welcome.

8th meeting of the Steering Committee - Athens, 23 June 2005

The eighth meeting of EMWIS Steering Committee took place in Athens on 23 June 2005 under the presidency of Spain and vice-presidency of Cyprus. Most of the country members of the Steering Committee were represented (Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and the Palestinian Authority) at the exception of Jordan (justified absence). Apologizes were also given for the Honorary President, Walter MAZZITTI (who was called for an urgent mission for the Middle-East Peace Process) and for Egypt that was willing to take part in the meeting as observer. The meeting was also attended by the President of the Mediterranean Water Institute as observer and by the organisation members of the EMWIS Technical Unit (CEDEX, OIEau and SOGESID).



The first session was dedicated to a discussion on potential synergies between EMWIS, the Mediterranean component of the European Union Water Initiative ([Med-EUWI](#)) and the Joint Process (JP) on the EU Water Framework Directive and the Water Initiative. The Greek EMWIS NFP (Water Department of the Ministry of Environment), the DG Environnement of the European Commission (Joint Process leader) and the International Department of the Greek Ministry of Environment (MED EUWI leader) took part in this session. After a brief reminder on each initiative, it was proposed:

- for the Med EUWI:
 - To present Med-EUWI during the EuroMed conference of the 35 general directors which will be organized in November 2005 by the EMWIS
 - To invite the EMWIS members to name representatives for the Med-EUWI working group

- For the Joint Process:
 - To use EMWIS as the electronic platform for exchanging information among the members of the working groups on the water scarcity and on groundwater
 - To propose to the water general directors of the 35 EuroMed countries to direct the future developments of the Joint Process

After this opened session, the Steering Committee President Dr. Juan CANOVAS, reviewed the activities since the last Committee meeting in May 2004. The statement of account for the period December 2003 - May 2005 (budget committed: 1 116 182 EUR) was presented and validated by the members of the Steering Committee.

The review of the activities undertaken during the first 18 months of the contract with the European Commission (December 2003 – May 2005) highlighted the progress achieved and the growing commitment of the National Focal Points of which 10 have defined their national work program.

The progress of the feasibility studies of the national water information systems caused much interest, in particular in terms of potential monitoring of the millennium goals and development of participative approaches. It was pointed out, that these studies are limited in terms of effort allocated and aim to help the countries to develop their internal system according to their own priorities (stakeholders concerned and contents). It is planned to present the first recommendations of these studies during the meeting of the general directors in November 2005.

For promoting the “EMWIS approach”, it was suggested analysing a possible participation into the [4th World Forum of the Water](#) which will be held from 16 to 26 March 2006 in Mexico City (possible sessions to present EMWIS: sharing knowledge or monitoring).

After the presentation of the call for tenders related to the improvement of the design and technical architecture of the EMWIS international website (implementation



planned for the end of 2005), the members of the Steering Committee stressed the importance a revision of the user interface design to facilitate access to information.

The organisation of the conference of the water general directors of the 35 EuroMed countries in November 2005 in Italy was agreed. The principal objective, recalled in the [note that Walter Mazzitti](#) proposed to the participants, is to reaffirm the validity of the system, the commitment of the countries to implement it, to adapt it and to take the ownership, as well as defining the strategy for the 10 next years. This conference will be also the occasion to analyse the involvement of the Mediterranean countries not signatory of the Barcelona declaration: Libya and Balkan countries. This event will be also the occasion to appoint the new Presidency of the Steering Committee. This conference could take place during the week of November 14, after the Ramadan, in order to be able to forward the conclusions to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Barcelona, 27-28 November 2005. Moreover, it was proposed:

- to integrate within EMWIS the monitoring for the Mediterranean of trends towards the Millennium Goals relating to water and sanitation, as well as the implementation of the water section of [the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development validated](#) by the Mediterranean Commission on sustainable development the 20, 21 and 22 June 2005 just before the meeting of the EMWIS Steering Committee in Athens,
- to stress the importance of the Water Framework Directive for the transfers of knowledge and experiences between the EU and the partner countries
- to evaluate the conditions of potential opening of EMWIS to the civil society
- to involve the European Commission departments working on the EU [neighbourhood policy](#) in order to improve the financing of the water sector in the partner countries
- to inform the ministers and water directors on the organisation of this conference in order to validate the dates as soon as possible

For the progress of the topical studies, the importance of achieving quickly preliminary results on the study relating to the “Integrated management of local drinking water supply, sanitation and sewage” was stressed in particular concerning the monitoring of the Millennium Goals.

The presentation of the first results of the survey on the concepts of interest of the [EU Water Framework Directive for Mediterranean Partner Countries](#) (MPC) gave place to a very positive debate. The [document presenting the results and the preliminary conclusions](#) will be transmitted for comments to the organisations which answered the survey, the EMWIS NFP and the European Commission (in particular to the persons in charge of the Joint Process) in order to finalise the report after the summer 2005. A possible presentation of the results obtained is considered during the [next meeting](#) of the European Basin Organisations Group for the implementation of the water Framework Directive (Namur, September 29 – October 1, 2005).

For the study on the non conventional water resources, a [progress report](#) was sent to participants before the meeting. It was suggested putting forward some case studies of



success and failure of implementation of such resources. This progress report will be also transmitted to the NFP for comments.

The [concept note](#) introducing a potential topical study on the specificities of the Mediterranean islands based on a short state of art in Cyprus, Malta and Sicily was well received. A complementary analysis will be nevertheless necessary to define the topics to be treated in more details in the framework of such a limited synthesis of experiences. During the discussion, many other topics were proposed, such as specificities of the oases, the intrusion of marine water or the exploitation of the underwater sources.

In terms of collaboration with other initiatives:

- The participants welcome the proposal for a memorandum of understanding between EMWIS and the regional monitoring and support unit ([RMSU](#)) of the European Commission's SMAP program (Euro-Mediterranean program for the environment). This protocol relates to the collection and the diffusion of information, in particular between the web sites of the two initiatives: the EMWIS ensuring the deputy management of the water section of the SMAP Unit website, and the SMAP Unit providing information on the SMAP projects relating to fresh water.
- The continuation of the discussions with the initiatives of Middle-East Peace Process in the water sector (EXACT and WaterNet) was reaffirmed: in particular for the valorisation and exploitation of the results obtained.
- The members of Steering Committee were informed of the renewal of the partnership agreement between the EMWIS, [INBO](#) (International Network of Basin organisations) and the [MENBO](#) (Mediterranean Network of the Basin Organisations) signed in Marrakech in May 2005,
- It was finally proposed to establish links with the Arab Water Council.

The President, Mr. Juan CANOVAS, closed the meeting and thanked again the Greek Authorities for their welcome and the possibility offered to establish synergies with the Mediterranean component of the European Union Water Initiative (MED EUWI), the Joint Process (JP) and the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD).

