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EURO-MEDITERRANEAN INFORMATION SYSTEM ON KNOW-HOW IN THE WATER SECTOR 1st Co-ordination Committee Meeting Sophia- Antipolis (France) - 2 and 3 December 1999

CONCLUSIONS

As planned in EMWIS action programme for year 1, EMWIS Co-ordination Committee, gathering the national focal points (NFP) and the Technical Unit, met in Sophia Antipolis (France), on 2 and 3 December 1999, under the chairmanship of Algeria.

The objective of this first meeting of the NFP's representatives with the Technical Unit was, above all:

- To provide the NFP's managers with a clear view of EMWIS, of the actions planned in the short and medium terms which will be implemented and of the contributions expected from each of them;
- To enable the Technical Unit's representatives to better comprehend the expectations and concerns of the National Focal Points;
- To assess the progress made in the NFP's setting-up.

15 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership delegated representatives from their National Focal Points (Algeria, Austria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Spain, Syria, Tunisia) or an observer (Finland).

Following the opening address of the Committee's chairman, Mr. Bengueddach, the first half day was devoted to the following:

- Reminder of EMWIS history and objectives since Marseilles Conference (November 1996) to the start of the Technical Unit;
- Presentation of a draft document summarising EMWIS orientations, namely "EMWIS Handy Guide";
- Presentation of the on-going activities in terms of access to information in the French and Spanish focal points, as examples.

All morning discussions emphasized the need to define, during these two days, concrete objectives for the NFPs.

The afternoon was devoted to the presentation of and discussions on the work plan of year 1 and to the introduction of the NFPs present, with a reminder of their main expectations as regards EMWIS.

During these introductions, the NFPs confirmed that:

- they had all access to the Internet, with, however, strong differences in access quality.
- they are willing to provide:
 - A quickly operational team;
 - A Web site in 1 to 6 months time.

They also confirmed their willingness to carry out all the tasks planned for the coming year, with in particular:

- an active participation in the studies related to the organisation of EMWIS communication network and to the preparation of directories;
- a participation in the 3 seminars planned for computers scientists and webmasters;
- the collection, validation and translation of the information necessary for preparing the directories of organisations (institutions, operators ...), of contact persons and information sources available in these organisations;

- the structuring and development of national Internet servers;
- making the collected information available on the servers in accordance, as far as possible, with the orientations set with the Technical Unit;
- the participation in studies on the criteria for information labelling;
- the identification and labelling in accordance with the criteria retained for the information which will be available for EMWIS;
- making the main available information sources accessible on-line.

At the end of year 2000, the NFPs and EMWIS Technical Unit should thus have server sites (at present, only 3 NFPs have information available on-line on their Web server) and be able to make accessible via the Internet their information related to:

- yellow pages of "who does what" in the water world in the Euro-Mediterranean countries;
- the catalogue of existing information sources;

with an on-line access to the main documentary information sources which are already available.

In order to carry out these various tasks, the NFPs requested that the Technical Unit:

- disseminates a detailed work plan with times and responsibilities;
- quickly presents proposals for the structuring of the NFPs' sites to enable the standardisation of interfaces;
- starts, as soon as possible, the preparation of data dictionaries to enable having the same understanding of the terms used;
- organises, as planned, the technical studies and the seminars addressing computer scientists and webmasters.

The Technical Unit reminded the participants that EMWIS is concerned with information on know-how and not with data on water resources (qualitative and quantitative aspects).

The morning of 3 December was devoted to:

- the presentation of the WEB site to the NFPs for validation
- economic aspects: presentation of the main expenditures
- the presentation of the conclusions.

The NFPs approved the server site draft developed by EMWIS and requested that its on-line operation be made official as soon as possible. They also agreed that the site updating would be the responsibility of the Technical Unit's members.

The Technical Unit will send, as soon as possible, the technical specifications regarding hardware and software to the NFPs for validation within the study of the communication network. The options chosen at the completion of the study will be discussed and validated during the seminar addressing the national focal points' computer scientists which will take place during the first semester of 2000.

From a more general viewpoint, the participants were reminded that when the countries committed themselves to the creation of NFPs, they also committed themselves to their financing.

Lastly, the participants recommended to the Management Committee that it launches a new operation for raising the awareness of the Northern European countries, which have not yet designated a NFP, on the fact that EMWIS is not solely intended for the Mediterranean countries.

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