

Coordination Committee Seminar Madrid – 25 / 27 June 2008

<http://www.emwis.net/documents/meetings/fol725266/nfpc02008>

CONCLUSIONS

(2008-08-20)

The 8th meeting of EMWIS Coordination Committee took place in Madrid (Spain) on 25-26 June 2008. The meeting was attended by 11 National Focal Points –NFP- (Egypt, France, Jordan, Israel, Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). The Algerian, Italian, and Lebanese NFPs were unable to attend the meeting (justified absence). This seminar was organised by Spanish EMWIS NFP, at the CEDEX office in Madrid. The last day of the seminar was dedicated to a study visit to the Water Expo of Zaragoza.

After the welcome speech addressed to the participants by M. Miguel ANTOLIN from the Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Maritime Affairs, the activities carried out by EMWIS between December 2003 and June 2008 (period covered by a contract with the European Commission DG Europe Aid) were reviewed. Then the EMWIS National Focal Points (NFP) presented their main achievements and plans for the future. The main achievements were related to revised versions of National web sites, increased level of awareness on National Water Information Systems among national institutions, new ICT Equipment, increased capacity to use advanced web technologies. The added value brought to the countries is the cooperation initiated between water information stakeholders (but not yet formalised) and the launch of a reference web site on water at the national level (unique water web portal for some countries, e.g. Tunisia or Lebanon).

From an institutional point of view, all the participants agreed that the National Focal Points will remain within the current institution hosting it. In some cases, the NFP website will be merged into the institution website to reduce maintenance burden.

The information provided by the NFP during and after the meeting will be used to prepare information sheets on each country presenting the NFP and some basic information on water management (legislation, main institutions and role, master plan, cost recovery).

After a reminder on the [EMWIS action plan validated by the Water Directors in 2005 \(Rome\)](#), the [brainstorming of the last coordination seminar \(Istanbul, 2007\)](#) and the [MEDA Water recommendations on water information systems \(April 2008\)](#), the NFP discussed their future priorities for joint activities. Various issues were raised for the future. From a content point of view, the need to exchange experiences on “Education and awareness campaigns on water saving” was expressed. Some NFP conducted qualitative assessment of user needs (web portal presentation and discussion), that highlighted the need of: national web portal users for i) more interactivity in order to provide feed back to the national water authority; ii) real time information and data. From a more technical point of view, the NFP expressed interest to have some focused activities on metadata management (e.g. Dublin Core), multilingual water thesaurus (enhancement with specific Arabic concepts, integration into local applications). The opportunity to initiate national water information committees was also mentioned as an added value to strengthen the NFP activities (promotion, coordination), provide guidance and share information.

The results of the feasibility study on a Mediterranean water observation mechanism were presented. The draft final report will be circulated for comments among the countries who took part in the study (Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Cyprus, Malta, France and Spain) during summer for publication early September 2008.



The NFP were then reminded on web content syndication principles, i.e. sharing content between various web sites. This technique based on the xml standard, is already applied by a number of NFP and allows the syndication of the water legislation, news, events and bibliographical references (using the Open Archive Initiative protocol).

The preparation of the Euromed ministerial conference on water to be held in Jordan the 29 October 2008 was briefly outlined, a dedicated website has been set up by EMWIS for this event at: <http://www.medaquaministerial2008.net/>. A specific attention was paid to the proposal for the [coordination of existing networks on information and expertise](#).

The MELIA project “Mediterranean Dialogue for Integrated Water Management” (<http://www.meliaproject.eu>), an EU funded Community of Practice project was presented. It aims at structuring an open dialogue between experts from both sides of the Mediterranean and among the key stake holders concerned and affected by water use and management. It covers all the Med countries. Some common interests with EMWIS were identified on: public participation in water management (consultation) and on indicators (quantity and quality) to resolve local conflicts.

The second day was dedicated to activities supported by a targeted project from EC DG Environment within the Thematic Programme for Environment and sustainable management of Natural Resources, including energy (ENRTP), entitled: Towards a Mediterranean Water Information Mechanism compatible with the Water Information System for Europe (WISE). The main lines of this project were presented. It covers 3 main types of activities:

- [Med Joint Process](#) working group activities on water monitoring and water scarcity & drought
- First steps to build a Mediterranean water information infrastructure as recommended by the feasibility study of the Med water observation mechanism. This part focuses on technical guidance for NWIS based on WISE principles and the preparation of a metadata catalogue.
- Preparing a Mediterranean entry point into WISE.

In this context, countries will have the opportunity to take part in working groups’ activities (experts still to be identified for some countries) and testing of interoperability principles.

After an introduction on the working groups of the Med Joint Process between the Water Framework Directive and EUWI (mandate, membership, progress):

- The management on water scarcity & drought was presented by Spain, highlighting current activities on indicators carried out at the EU level.
- Malta gave an overview of the report on waste water reuse in the Mediterranean
- Tunisia presented existing water monitoring networks (quality and quantity)

The basic technical principles of WISE interoperability were reviewed. It was stressed that WISE guidance documents are currently under revisions with GIS –Geographical Information Systems- guidelines. The first level is based on existing ISO standards while the semantic interoperability is foreseen with the application of INSPIRE directive rules.

The presentation was completed by the example of the French catalogue of metadata integrating information on some 400 sources of water information. It showed the current standards and tools used for metadata catalogues, its management and the interoperability based on simple data format transformations. It also highlighted the necessity to adopt some common standards and rules to ensure interoperability and limit maintenance efforts: (e.g. cartographic referential, types of data; keywords,).

Morocco presented the progress made on the preparation of a National Water Information System. Indeed, on the basis of the NWIS feasibility study carried out by EMWIS, the system is going to be implemented in coordination with other ministries and institutions using national funds. Jordan,



Turkey and Egypt gave also presentations on their developments. All the countries stressed their commitment to implement NWIS (as such system is now also recommended within other frameworks such as [CEDARE project proposal: "A Water MDGs Monitoring and Evaluation Program in North Africa"](#)) and the need for more support in this field.

Finally, the NFP were informed about the organisation of national meetings (Tunisia, [Egypt](#), [Syria](#), Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) related to "Environmental Information Exchange and Reporting Mechanisms in the Mediterranean" organised by the SMAP regional support unit to increase dialogue at the national level in this field within established inter-governmental programmes and initiatives, particularly Horizon 2020 (reducing the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea).

Eric MINO, EMWIS coordinator, ended the seminar by thanking the participants and the CEDEX team for its warm welcome. The next meeting will take place in 2009.

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