
PRESS RELEASE

PROGRESS IN JOINT EFFORTS TO DEPOLLUTE THE MEDITERRANEAN BY YEAR 2020

The Horizon 2020 Steering Group is holding its 4th meeting in Amman Jordan (22-23 February 2011). The meeting is attended by representatives of the Ministry of Environment in Jordan, the EU Directorate General for Environment, and member countries of the programme.

Most of the meeting is dedicated to the progress in the Horizon 2020 components - investment; monitoring, review and research; capacity building- financed mainly by ENPI projects. Indeed, pollution in the Mediterranean is tackled at three different levels:

- Major infrastructure investments for waste and water related facilities (e.g. landfills and sewage treatment plants), installation of pollution reduction technologies in industries, etc. The first five front-runner projects under the H2020 investment component have been identified including projects for dump sites, waste water treatment plants and solid waste management.

- This action is accompanied by regional, sub-regional and national activities to build or strengthen institutional and individual capacities, sensitise and mobilise civil society so as to effectively contribute to environmental protection and mainstreaming into other sectors. Currently, 10 out of 140 capacity building activities planned till late 2012 have already taken place.

- In parallel, indicators and scorecards are being identified to help Mediterranean countries produce reliable, comparable and timely statistical data and information to monitor progress in the depollution process. (More detailed information on the three components is available at www.h2020.net and <http://coordination.h2020.net/>).

During the meeting, the state of play with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) will also be outlined and perspectives for the future will be discussed. This will also include the current situation with the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) and the outlook for its adoption in the coming period as well as related and new UfM priorities and initiatives.

The Steering Group members consist of nominated focal points of the Ministries of Environment from the EU Member States, the ENP Partner Countries, other regional/international organizations active in the protection of the Mediterranean, International Financing Institutions, the European Commission, and other interested stakeholders, such as municipalities, regional networks, NGOs and the business sector.

The meeting will conclude with discussion on the next phase of Horizon 2020, and a recap of the most important outcomes and recommendations.

On Jordan's contribution to the programme, Irene Mingasson, Head of the Development and Regional Cooperation Section at the EU Delegation in Jordan said: "EU considers Jordan as a model on environmental institutional reform." She explained that "based on its vast experience and true commitment to Euro-Med environmental integration, Jordan played a major role in the development of Horizon 2020, starting from helping to shape its themes and objectives to participating in the development of the overall work-plan."

Note to the editor:

The Steering Group is responsible for the implementation of the Horizon 2020 Initiative in which all EuroMediterranean countries jointly work towards de-polluting the Mediterranean by the year 2020. The focus of the Initiative is tackling municipal solid waste, urban waste water and industrial pollution that account for around 80% of the overall pollution of the Mediterranean Sea.

Horizon 2020 builds on existing institutions and results, filling gaps where it could bring added value. It operates within the existing and developing policy instruments, and supports the implementation of the commitments undertaken in the framework of the ENP as well as other regional agreements e.g. of the Barcelona Convention and UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan, while cooperating, coordinating and synergising with all relevant (EU and other) programmes.

For more information on the H2020 Initiative:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/horizon_2020_en.htm

<http://www.h2020.net/>

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