

Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on local water management

TURIN, 18-19 OCTOBER 1999

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, FINLAND,
ALGERIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, CYPRUS, DENMARK, EGYPT,
SPAIN, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, IRELAND, ISRAEL, ITALY, JORDAN,
LEBANON, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, MAROCCO, THE NETHERLANDS,
PORTUGAL, SWEDEN, SYRIA, TUNISIA, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY,

participants in the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Local Water Management in Turin, 18 - 19 October 1999,

- Recalling the adoption in May 1990 of the Algiers Declaration which affirmed the importance of a common strategy for water management and the adoption in Rome in 1992 of the Mediterranean Charter for Water which established the principle of regional and international co-operation in the water sector;
- Stressing the priority given to water in the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 and taking into account the principles of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation adopted during the 1st Ministerial Conference on Water in Marseilles in November 1996;
- Considering the Chairman's conclusions of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Stuttgart in April 1999; in particular water was reasserted as one of the six priority sectors of economic co-operation in the Euro-Mediterranean region and it was requested that recommendations for operational activities at the regional level emerge from the Turin Conference;
- Considering the need to identify and analyse eventual changes in water demand and use due to changing production patterns and restructuring of economic sectors, in view of the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone;
- Recalling that integrated water management is one of the five priorities of the Short and Medium-Term Priority Environmental Action Programme (SMAP) adopted during the Helsinki Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Environment Ministers in November 1997;
- Considering the recommendations concerning water demand management in the Mediterranean made by the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSDD) and adopted in Tunis in November 1997 by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention;
- Considering the documents prepared, under the aegis of the Global Water Partnership and of the World Water Council concerning global and Mediterranean visions for water, population and environment into the 21st century, building up to the World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference of The Hague in March 2000;
- Considering also the contributions suggested by the Action Plan adopted by the General Assembly of the Mediterranean Water Network in Malta in 1999;
- Noting that water consumption has increased by 60% in the Mediterranean during the last twenty-five years and continues to do so; at the same time, available water resources are becoming increasingly scarce, threatened and fragile and impacts on the population and the environment are already considerable;
- Considering it, therefore, necessary to anticipate and promote better integrated strategies and water management policies;

agreed to

- Reassert and complete the principles and areas for action of the Rome Mediterranean Charter for Water of 1992 and the Marseilles Declaration of November 1996 by the following points:
1. The importance of water resources in social, economic and environmental terms needs to be

acknowledged at all levels and integrated into sustainable development policies;

2. Decision makers, institutions, water managers and users should be aware of the interaction and complementarity of their roles and encourage the development of a "culture system" directed to water that aims to change behaviour in order to achieve sustainable water management;

3. Good co-ordination, complementarity and synergy among existing organisations and activities in this field are indispensable;

4. A participatory approach should be encouraged that involves the civil society, including water users and organisations at local, regional, sub-national and national level;

5. Greater priority should be given to sustainable water demand management within the framework of integrated water policy;

6. Water scarcity could be alleviated through mobilisation of non conventional water resources, such as reuse of wastewater or desalination, and sustainable methods of rain stimulation, whenever justified;

7. Improved water management in urban and rural areas, especially disadvantaged ones, needs special attention in order to provide access to clean water and to avoid inefficient use;

- Approve the general strategic guidelines of the annexed Action Plan. This Action Plan promotes, as a first step, the following six priorities:

1. Integrated management of local drinking water supply, sanitation and sewage services;

2. Local water resources and water demand management (quantity and quality) within catchment areas and islands;

3. Prevention and mitigation of the negative effects of drought and equitable management of water scarcity;

4. Irrigation water management;

5. Use of non-conventional water resources;

6. Preparation of national and local scenarios for the period until 2025 that enable precise objectives to be set and action to be taken for sustainable water management;

- Consider the following activities, when implementing the six priorities:

1. Strengthening institutional capacities and training;

2. Exchange of information and know-how in a coherent manner;

3. Transfer of know-how and technology;

4. Awareness raising, mobilisation and promotion of commitment by all beneficiaries;

- Endeavour to implement the themes and priority actions of this Action Plan drawing on the complementary nature of existing organisations and structures in the region and in each country. The Action Plan should mobilise the competent authorities, local actors, NGO's, professional organisations and socio-economic partners.
- Endeavour to make available the necessary financial resources and other means for implementing rational and sustainable water policy in the Mediterranean, taking into account the vital value of water and the importance of economically balanced management and its social aspects.

Within the framework of this Action Plan, the MEDA programme, in its regional context, should be mobilised by means of a call for proposals for significant regional projects as soon as possible after the Turin conference. The objective is to implement, in the year 2000, a coherent set of operational projects resulting from the Action Plan priorities.

In this context, the role of the Member States of the EU, as well as the European Commission, for the coherent and effective implementation of the Plan within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership will be essential.

For its part, the European Investment Bank (EIB) should pursue its mobilisation of public and private

investment funds for projects of regional or national interest within the framework of infrastructures for water resources management and environmental protection.

Moreover, the Action Plan will form a reference document vis-à-vis other sponsors and investors;

- Entrust the Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors, and the Commission, noting the co-ordinating role of the Commission, the task of orienting, following up and assessing the implementation of the Action Plan. To achieve this, they will make use of the Mediterranean Water Network, the Euro-Mediterranean Water management Information System (EMWIS) as well as of other relevant competent structures. They should also take account of existing programmes, in particular SMAP.
- Emphasise the importance of EMWIS as a strategic tool for exchange of information and know-how in the Euro-Mediterranean area and consolidate it within the mandate it has been given. Participation in EMWIS should be extended to the greatest possible number of Euro-Mediterranean Partners and the national focal points should be assisted on an ongoing basis in their role, particularly through the provision of all necessary data in a coherent manner.