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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of MED POL Focal Points

Barcelona (Spain), 18-21 June 2013

Minutes of the H2020 initiative Steering Group, 2011-2012

Delegates are kindly requested to bring their documents to the meeting
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT

Directorate E - International Affairs

**FOURTH MEETING OF THE HORIZON 2020 STEERING GROUP
AMMAN
22-23 FEBRUARY 2011
SUMMARY RECORD**

1. Opening remarks

Following welcoming remarks from Mr Ahmad Al Qataneh, Assistant Secretary General at the Ministry of Environment in Jordan further opening remarks were given by Ms Irene Mingasson from EU Delegation to Jordan and Mr Nick Hanley from DG Environment at the European Commission. An introductory intervention was made by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) co-chair, Mr Antoine Tristan-Mocilnikar from the Mission for the UFM, France. Apologies were received from the Egyptian co-chair who was unable to attend due to recent events in the country.

2. Adoption of Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting

The Agenda of the Meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Copies of the presentations given during the meeting are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/2011_amman_en.htm

3. Context: State of play with the Union for the Mediterranean

The co-chair outlined the current state of play of the UfM and highlighted a number of meetings and activities that had taken place since the last meeting despite the difficult context. It is clear that the ongoing events in the region will lead to further evolution of this regional policy but the shape of this evolution is not yet clear.

The UfM Secretariat is now up and running with an agreed budget and programme of work. A number of good candidates had come forward to replace the outgoing Secretary General, a sign of an organisation that was becoming firmly established.

Attending his first Horizon 2020 meeting as Deputy Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat, Rafiq Husseini made an introductory intervention in which he outlined his desire to work with all of the partners in the region and reassured participants that the Secretariat was not seeking to duplicate ongoing work but to supplement it working on issues where the Secretariat could add value.

The state of play with the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean was given. Whilst the H2020 focal points are not necessarily those dealing with water issues the linkages were felt to be sufficiently strong for the issue to be of interest to the H2020 meeting. With the political blockage on the wording of the Strategy having persisted since the Ministerial meeting in April 2010 the technical and political aspects will be de-coupled to enable technical work to proceed. In practical terms this "de-coupling" will mean that diplomatic efforts to resolve the wording of the Strategy will continue through the regular UfM Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). However the technical development of the national Action Plans foreseen under the Strategy may now begin in parallel. The intention is to try to be in a position to adopt the complete package (Strategy and Action Plans) at a future ministerial meeting when the outstanding political issues have been resolved.

In the subsequent discussion the added value of the UfM was raised. It was suggested that one potential that is yet to be fully exploited is the possibility of reaching out beyond environment ministries to those other ministries who are essential to deliver environmental protection. Integration into other sectors could be helped by the cross-sectorial nature of the UfM and the possibility of obtaining endorsement for actions at the highest level of government. One useful role that could be played by the UfM Secretariat would be to keep an accessible overview of the projects that are ongoing or completed from all of the donor community as this is presently lacking.

4. Reports on the components of Horizon 2020

Mr. Jesús Laviña (EuropeAid, European Commission) introduced the item and gave an overview of the projects being supported by the Commission.

4.1 Pollution reduction project component

Mr Otto Hüsken from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the team implementing the Mediterranean Hot-Spot Investment Programme – Project Preparation and Implementation Facility (MeHSIP-PPIF) gave a comprehensive overview of the state of play of the situation with the various front-runner projects. They also drew attention to the newly created web-site on which much of the information can now be found (www.mehsip-ppif.eu). A presentation of MeHSIP-PPIF's activities in Lebanon was given by Mr Bassam Sabbagh from the Ministry of Environment. In addition an overview of the work being carried out to extend the MeHSIP-PPIF to the Western Balkans under the Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP) was given by Ms Christine Haffner.

Information was provided by Mr Ivica Trumbic on the UNEP/MAP GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem and the need for close cooperation with this important project was recognised.

In the exchanges that followed a number of participants sought clarity on what was meant by "funding secured" and how these secure projects were followed up once they were no longer being followed under the MeHSIP-PPIF project. There were questions raised on the issue of 'non-bankable' projects and how they could be dealt with. A couple of countries highlighted that they do not take EIB loans and therefore are not involved with the MeHSIP-PPIF being outside the scope of this work.

There was a feeling in the meeting that projects for which funding was secure still needed to be followed and that statistics on projects are required to give an overview and demonstrate progress. Some of this data is provided on the MeHSIP-PPIF web-site

(www.mehsip-ppif.eu) but some additional clarifications would be given on projects for which funding was secured. Input from all donors/IFIs would be needed to develop an overview. There was a suggestion that the UfM Secretariat would be the logical place to develop the overview and regular reporting on updates of ongoing projects with funding secured as well as the overall reporting on the Horizon 2020 Project List, but recognition that the current level of staffing and resources may not be able to yet provide it.

4.2. Monitoring component of H2020

Mr. David Stanners (EEA) described the state of play in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) for Horizon 2020. He explained the philosophy of SEIS and gave an overview of the activities that would be undertaken under the ENPI project including the country visits that will take place later in the year. It was emphasised that the Horizon 2020 focal points would need to be kept fully informed and play an active role in these visits that are to be the starting point for the SEIS development across the region.

This was followed by an outline from CEDARE of their work and collaboration with the EEA in assisting the monitoring component of Horizon 2020.

During discussions it was underlined that UNEP/MAP was a key partner in this work and is committed to playing an active role in the system.

In the discussion that followed a number of partner countries outlined the difficulties that they faced particularly in the absence of baseline data. The comment was also made that the research element of Horizon 2020 was in danger of being overlooked and that particular efforts were needed to focus on this issue particularly in the monitoring and research sub-group.

Participants were informed that the next meeting of the Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) Sub-Group would be held at the premises of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen. A comment was made that the last meeting had been held over two years ago (October 2008 in Athens) but it was explained that this was not an indication of lack of progress. The intervening period had seen intensive contacts and numerous meetings between the key organisations involved in monitoring activity and that the launch meeting for the SEIS project (Brussels, November 2010) had been a first occasion to bring together the country representatives to begin working on the issue.

4.3. Capacity building

Professor Michael Scoullios gave a detailed presentation in which he outlined the background to the Capacity Building Sub-Group and the Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP). The MEP is the capacity building project that is being financed by the European Commission in support of Horizon 2020. He gave a detailed description of the methodology, the principles of the project approach and the expected results. It was explained that the project covers not only the Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries but also the Mediterranean countries of South East Europe. He explained how following a period of intense country visits the MEP Work Programme was endorsed at the meeting of the Horizon 2020 Capacity Building Sub-Group that was held in Brussels in June 2010 and its implementation is currently well under way despite the recent political developments in the region.

The meeting was informed of the coordination mechanism that has been set up between the three sub-groups of Horizon 2020 (Pollution Reduction, RMR and Capacity Building) as well as an internet site (www.h2020.net) that is now operational covering three of the H2020 components (pollution reduction, capacity building and monitoring) and also covers the Commission projects financed under the ENPI in support of these components. A demonstration of the internet site was given.

Professor Scoullos outlined some of the training seminars and other activities that have already taken place under the project as well as the communication initiatives that are taking place. A summary of activities planned for the near future was also given.

An explanation of synergies and coordination with other actors was also provided in the presentation.

M. Bouzekri Razi followed with a presentation giving the viewpoint of Morocco on its participation in the capacity building activities. He outlined the country visits and preparatory work that had gone into the preparation of the activities in which his country had participated to date. He finished with a call to foresee national events to complement the sub-regional activities as a way of reaching a wider public.

In the discussion that followed, questions were asked as to how the synergies between the different groups were to be pursued. The co-chair made a general remark (applicable to other elements of the agenda) that for future meetings it would be useful to have written report with much of the detail that was currently included in the presentations being given in writing. It was also felt that capacity building activities should be adjusted to take into account new developments of countries' policies.

Under this item Mr Sherif Arif gave a presentation informing participants of the Sustainable Water Integrated Management Support System (SWIM) project.

4.4 Next phase

The final item was a wide ranging discussion on Horizon 2020, its progress, its future and a number of other issues of interest to participants.

When discussing investment projects the question was asked as to whom updates should be sent as the situation with investment needs changed. The answer was given that if it concerns investment projects that are yet to secure funding and part of Horizon 2020 Pipeline, then the MeHSIP-PPIF team would be happy to receive updates. It was suggested that other updates could be sent to the UfM Secretariat. Another point that also was stressed concerned the mechanism to be adopted for regular reporting on investment projects. The point made was that these investment projects have national ownership and it is, therefore, primarily the responsibility of the national project promoter to ensure regular updates are provided to the relevant host/manager of the investment pipeline.

There was a call from the co-chair to use all available means to circulate information. The need to be able to produce easily understandable figures of achievement for the projects was re-iterated. There was support for the UfM Secretariat to work on the issue as it becomes increasingly operational. There was also a discussion on what could be done to increase the awareness of activities for various target audiences (decision makers, general public, national administrations). Whilst all participants agreed on the need for awareness raising there was no clear consensus on how this should be achieved.

In the discussions around training some participants asked that the courses should have an evaluation form and that this should be shared after the event with the Focal Points.

A number of Horizon 2020 Focal Points felt that they were struggling to effectively participate in H2020 given the large number of activities and the wide range of responsibilities they carry and were looking for assistance. The European Commission clarified that whilst it could try to assist through projects it is not allowed to support staff costs in partner country ministries.

5. Concluding remarks

The Head of the EU delegation, Ms Joanna Wronecka closed the meeting. In her intervention she outlined the methods of cooperation and reassured participants that at a time when change is sweeping the Mediterranean, the commitment of the EU to cooperation with its partners remains constant.

FIFTH MEETING OF THE HORIZON 2020 STEERING GROUP

BARCELONA

19 APRIL 2012

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

1. Opening remarks

Following welcoming remarks from Ms Marta Subirà, Director General for Environment Policy in the Generalitat de Catalunya further opening remarks were given by Rafiq Hussein, Deputy Secretary General for Environment and Water from the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. The chair of the meeting, Mr Nick Hanley (DG Environment, European Commission) added a short intervention followed by Liselotte Isaksson (EuropeAid, European Commission).

2. Adoption of Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting

The Agenda of the Meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Copies of the presentations given during the meeting are available at:

<http://www.h2020.net/en/resources/meeting-documents/viewcategory/171.html>

3. Context: State of play with the Union for the Mediterranean

Rafiq Hussein, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Environment & Water file, welcomed the Steering Group in Barcelona. There were several local and national conflicts in the region, he added, but there were more dangerous common regional enemies: pollution, global warming, desertification and water scarcity.

Highlighting the work of the UfM in the identification, development, 'labelling' and promotion of regional, sub-regional or trans-national projects, or projects falling within agreed regional frameworks, such as H2020, he stated that the UfM Secretariat wanted to play a meaningful role in the H2020 process, so that its objectives would be reached by the end of the decade, but which could only be achieved through full and genuine cooperation between government representatives, the national focal points, as well as international and regional agencies, NGOs and civil society networks.

He also emphasized the need to strengthen working relations with southern regional or sub-regional organisations such as the Arab League, the Maghreb Union, the Gulf Council, in order to promote co-ownership and two-way cooperation avenues, adding that there was an urgent need to identify 'champions' in the south, but also in the North, who could help further promote H2020 concepts, ideas and ownership.

Hussein added that "think piece", slated for later discussion, gave thoughtful directions and answers to important H2020 questions and asked for a lively discussion on the "piece" to identify some gaps that needed to be filled in order to further clarify the UfM Secretariat role in advancing the H2020 process. He also suggested that the "think piece", after discussion, could be adopted as a 'Guiding Principles' document, illuminating the way for proceeding ahead in the near future, until such time that Phase 1 of H2020 actions was fully appraised and an action plan for Phase 2 was concluded.

4. Reports on the components of Horizon 2020

4.1 Pollution reduction project component

The European Investment Bank (EIB), responsible for the Pollution Reduction Component, presented the EIB/FEMIP portfolio as well as EIB's projects appraisal process and criteria.

The team of consultants in charge of MeHSIP-PPIF made a presentation of the work and progress made in the PPIF component. A detailed description on project preparation for investment was also delivered for the benefit of participating countries. The description was very much appreciated clarifying many aspects of the process and bridging the gap between governments and IFIs. Another detailed presentation was provided on the list of Hot Spots projects identified along the Southern Med Coast. This list that is currently managed by the MeHSIP-PPIF team reflects a clear picture on the progress done in the region and identifies the depollution investment portfolio that has still to secure financing. The issue of maintaining this list after the MeHSIP-PPIF mandate ends was an important subject raised for future solutions.

It was noted and appreciated that this H2020 component will very concretely contribute to de-pollution of the Mediterranean. Moreover it was highlighted that the impact of the ongoing project preparation activities are not only confined the relevant project sites but have extended to tackle sources of pollution at the upstream or across the sectors at large amplifying depollution efforts and creating a national debate for implementing solutions.

It was recognized that the four projects under preparation are expected to catalyse positive sector developments in the targeted countries, since the preparation contributes to identifying and pointing at the need to address sector barriers and constraints. It was noted that part of the H2020 list of projects in the Southern Mediterranean region contains a total of 51 projects that have secured financing. Accordingly participants highlighted that collection of data on the 51 projects could provide a clearer picture on the status of implementation and sustainability of investments made in depollution projects that would lead to identifying depollution targets set through the H2020 initiative under the Barcelona Convention as well as important feedback on enabling and inhibiting factors that could contribute to the preparation of the depollution projects...

The feedback about the MeHSIP-PPIF work and progress was positive. Questions whether it will continue beyond the projects under preparation were raised and discussed.

4.2. Monitoring component of H2020

Ronan Uhel (EEA) reported on the State of Play of work under the Review, Monitoring and Research sub-group, recalling the philosophy of SEIS and highlighting the different activities implemented with the support of the ENPI-SEIS project fully operational since 2010, particularly the identification by the countries of actions/pilots to be implemented, then contributing to the production of a joint EEA-UNEP/MAP Horizon 2020 assessment report by mid-2013. He informed about the establishment of the RMR Working Group on Environmental Indicators linking the indicators development with the implementation of SEIS and of the results achieved by the Working Group during its first meeting in Barcelona on April 18, 2012.

In order to answer the key H2020 policy question "What is the progress in depolluting the Mediterranean", a set of policy questions for each of the three thematic areas as been

identify together with some indicators. Thanks to the efforts and active involvement of the Working Group members a list of indicators was endorsed by the participants after confirming that the right policy questions have been formulated and suitable indicators have been selected to answer these questions. The selected indicators are:

- Total production of household waste in hydrological basin
- Collection rate of household waste (coastal)
- Type of treatment of municipal waste
- Number and localisation of landfill
- Share of population with access to an improved sanitation system (total, urban, rural)
- Volume of waste water collected, of which volume of waste water treated by the public sanitation system
- Type of waste water treatment
- Nutrient concentrations in coastal waters (Links with ecosystem approach, MSFD)
- Release of toxic substances and nutrients from industrial sectors

During the WG discussions it was underlined that additional developments and connection with the ENPI-SEIS Working Group on Information Technology and the implementation of the country pilots are required; then an adjusted list together with indicators fact sheet and a draft outline of the regional report will be submitted for adoption to the next RMR in June.

Participants were informed about the next steps and key dates: next meeting of the Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) sub-group will be held at the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen, 4-5 June 2012, second RMR Working Group on Environmental Indicators in October 2012.

4.2.1 Research

A short summary of current activities in the research field and in particular the work of the MIRA group dealing with water issues was given. In the ensuing discussion the possibility of separating out the research activities from the RMR sub-group was raised. With the research and the monitoring activities involving two distinct groups of participants it was felt that the creation of a small "research" core group may be one way to correctly address the issue. It was decided to further discuss this issue in the forthcoming RMR sub-group.

4.3. Capacity building

Michael Scoullas (H2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme Team Leader) thanked the European Commission for ensuring the 2-year extension of the programme before going into reporting on the main outcomes of the 3rd H2020 Capacity Building Sub-Group Meeting that took place on the 18th of April 2012.

There was an overall positive response from the countries and stakeholders with a demonstrated ownership of the capacity building and environmental integration activities and benefits gained through them. The main merits were identified to be: (a) the strong links with country/stakeholder demands and national priorities; (b) the practical/tangible approach followed in addressing short and medium term needs; (c) flexibility in adapting to emerging needs (programming, accepting additional trainees, etc.) and (d) commitment of countries/H2020 Focal Points and EU Delegations' involvement.

Environmental integration and mainstreaming is by its nature a longer term objective and therefore, has, as expected, been a somewhat difficult process dominated by national political culture factors. Yet, already many positive results have been recorded in Lebanon, Tunisia, Israel, Croatia, Morocco and Palestine, which can be directly or indirectly linked to H2020 CB/MEP activities: trainings and study visits.

The H2020 Capacity Building component has obtained a very high level of synergy with all relevant EU, UfM and Med/regional actors, a process which could be further enhanced. The programme of CB activities also addresses in a reasonably balanced way all aspects of the Project Cycle (design, science, policy frameworks, stakeholder involvement, implementation, project sustainability, etc.).

Coming to the next 2-year phase of the project (2013-2014), it was agreed that there is no need for a new “inception phase”. Each country’s list of priorities will be re-visited with the involvement of the Focal Points, the European Commission, consortium members/experts, etc., in a transparent manner.

Some capacity building activities could address the pollution reduction measures (pollutants and targets) agreed under UNEP/MAP. Other themes and methodologies for the next phase that were explicitly mentioned during the discussion were: green economy and strengthened private sector involvement, combining ICZM and IWRM with ecosystem approach, stakeholder involvement, education for sustainable development, awareness raising, development of communication materials for post training use in-country, increased hands-on experiences/best practices/study visits, adaptability to the extent possible in terms of use of national languages and duration.

It is vital to maintain the very close coordination achieved so far at all levels: European Commission, Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader, Countries, Consortium members, etc.

5. Progress and Evaluation of UNEP/MAP's National Action Plans to address land-based pollution

UNEP/MAP Secretariat gave information on the status of the implementation of the national actions plans (NAPs) adopted by the Mediterranean countries in the framework of the Land based pollution Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. The NAPs include based on the specific priorities of each country, a number of legal, policy, capacity building and monitoring interventions as well as a priority list of environmental investments with regard to waste water from municipal and industrial sources, solid waste, hazardous waste, air pollution and obsolete chemicals management. The NAPs provided for concrete actions until 2010 and beyond. Since their endorsement in 2005 by the 13th COP to the Barcelona Convention, the progress is on-going and several projects were under implementation. The H2020 initiative including its projects/programmes on capacity building and pollution reduction were substantively contributing to the implementation of the NAPs by enhancing and renewing country commitment on the national and regional levels with regards to pollution reduction and elimination in the Mediterranean and bringing additional and important technical assistance and financial resources. The evaluation of the implementation of NAP would also lead to the need for their update so as to take into account the progress achieved so far and lessons learned as well as the challenges of implementing ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean in synergy with EU Marine Strategy Directive.

6. General discussion on the "think piece"

As a means of initiating a reflection on the *modus operandi* of Horizon 2020 the European Commission introduced a "think piece" paper as a starting point for reflection.

With Horizon 2020 approaching its mid-point and in light of the changes that have taken place in the Mediterranean during 2011/2012 it was felt that the time was right to consider whether the initiative needs to evolve as it moves into the second half of its period of operation. The European Commission underlined that the document was intended to provide a basis for discussion by offering a set of opinions but was not pretending to be an exhaustive or comprehensive analysis. The document aimed to reflect on the drivers, threats and opportunities of the last months looking at the changes to the political landscape and their effects on Horizon 2020 and then trying to identify the threats and opportunities that have arisen from these changes.

During the discussion that followed a variety of views were expressed on how to move forward with Horizon 2020 but the general consensus was that the sharp focus on a limited number of sectors had proven successful. The time that was taken with the Mediterranean Environment Programme to tailor the activities to meet the expressed needs of partner countries had led to a high level of interest and a stronger sense of 'ownership' than may otherwise have been the case.

In conclusion, participants were asked to further reflect on the document and provide their comments in writing so that they could be incorporate into a revised version.

7. Concluding remarks

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked the participants for their active contributions. With 2013 being the halfway point in the Horizon 2020 initiative further consideration will be given as to how to deliver the results of a mid-term review. One possibility could be a ministerial meeting but it was recognised that this will depend on a number of factors beyond the control of the participants and a strong support from governments on both sides of the Mediterranean.