



Towards a new water policy in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean States must make access to water and sanitation and tackling pollution part of the priorities of their national budgets and set themselves objectives in terms of results.

- Adopt a national framework for long-term organisation of financing of all expenditure
- Develop a balanced approach with management of water demand and a strategy to secure and diversify water supply sources OU strategy for securing and diversifying
- Stabilise water demand and increase the added value created per m3 of water used by saving one quarter of the demand through the reduction of losses and inappropriate uses
- Halt degradation of aquatic ecosystems to protect biodiversity and acknowledge the free services they provide
- Increase information about the state of the ground and surface water resources and the natural environments
- Strengthen the technical capabilities of the water stakeholders and educate the citizens about its fragility and the importance of sensible use of water.
- Facilitate access to financing from the international funding institutions, through harmonisation of their intervention procedures
- Develop international cooperation to make the region a model of sustainable development



COMMITTED TO WATER FOR THE WORLD.

TO AVOID A "WATER CRISIS" IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, A STRATEGY OF CONCRETE PROJECTS

Four priorities

- Mediterranean countries put water high in their priorities and devote long-term budgetary means to it
- Improved management of water demand limits the need for additional resources
- The economic stakeholders associations and local authorities take part in the decision-making process and the projects
- The international funding institutions harmonise their financing rules

A water resource crisis in less than one generation

In the Mediterranean, water remains a rare, fragile and unevenly distributed resource throughout the region and over time. Of the 547 million Mediterraneans (of whom 258 million live in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries), 20 million have no access to drinking water and 47 million have no sanitation system.

Water demand doubled in the second half of the 20th century and in 2005 reached 280 km³ per year for all Mediterranean rim countries. Agriculture, which is the main consumer of water, absorbs 64% of this total water demand in the Mediterranean basin.

Global changes – rising standards of living, demographic growth, migration and climate change – will exacerbate the pressure on the water resource.

The Union for the Mediterranean

The Union for the Mediterranean was launched in 2007 by the French Head of State, on the basis of the Barcelona Process. It was officially created on 13th of July 2008, at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean. It comprises 44 States.

The aim is to reinforce cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, to increase political, economic and social solidarity. This involves developing large regional projects meeting the needs of the populations.

Three simple principles underpin this Union:

- political mobilisation at the highest level through Summits of Head of State and Government every two years;
- governance founded on equality, as shown by north-south joint presidency and a parity permanent secretariat;
- emphasis on concrete, regional projects designed to create solidarity.


Water is one of the main priorities of this Union, including efficient management of the resource and of water demand as well as tackling pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. A regional Strategy will be approved in this sector by mid-2010 and the first series of concrete projects will start in 2009.

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Strengthening the cooperation between both Mediterranean banks for an efficient water management

The pollution threat

The tensions around natural water resources are compounded by man-made degradation and pollution, which modify both the flow and quality of the water, placing even greater pressure on water uses.

Effluents are discharged without treatment into the natural ecosystem in 200 coastal towns around the Mediterranean. 25% of households in North Africa has no access to a basic service (latrine) and are particularly exposed to water-borne diseases. Improving sanitation is a priority for the region.

A “sustainable” treatment plant for Amman

Since 2008, the metropolitan region of Amman (Jordan, 2.2 million inhabitants) has had a treatment plant enabling maximum recovery of renewable energies (biogas from the digesters, hydraulic turbines) and thus has very low greenhouse gas emissions. It produces 260,000m³/d of water reusable for agriculture and organic soil conditioners so valuable for the region.

It was built under a “Build, Operate and Transfer” contract, the first one in Jordan, and co-financed by the Jordanian government, USAid and the manufacturer (a joint venture between the American-Palestinian company Morganti and the Suez Environnement group).

Degradation of aquatic biodiversity

The Mediterranean region is unique in terms of its biodiversity, which is under particular threat due to the pressure exerted by man. Over the last 50 years, more than half of the wetlands have disappeared.

Upstream-downstream water solidarity: a reality in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region

The public local authorities of the Region and the City of Marseille combined their efforts to ensure long-term security of water supply for all urban, industrial and irrigation uses, when in 1957 they created the Société du Canal de Provence, in which they are majority shareholders.

Water pricing covers all the operating and maintenance costs, infrastructure renovation as well as the reimbursement of the loans taken into account to finance the investments.

The infrastructures and waterways of the Provence Canal carry 660 million m³ per year and supply water to the lower Alps and Mediterranean coast.

Saving water and improving management of water demand: a social, economic and ecological necessity

Increasing the water supply, which has been the traditional response in the Mediterranean, has now reached its limits. According to the Plan Bleu, improving water demand management would save one quarter of the 2025 current demand, which is more than 85 km³ per year.

Water losses due to the various industrial, domestic and agricultural uses: leaks and transfers (primarily in agriculture) represent more than twice the rise in needs. Limiting these losses would avoid having to build nearly 100 dams between now and 2015.

Other possible solutions could be envisaged for increasing the mass of water available: reuse of wastewater; improvements in infiltration techniques; desalination of seawater and brackish water (for example using solar power).

Building solidarity for water and peace

Most countries in the Mediterranean basin share surface and ground water resources with one or more other countries. These shared waters, such as the Nile, Jordan or the aquifers of the northern Sahara and the Nubian basin, are often the source of tension linked to sharing of the resource.

Joint management taking account of all the uses of the shared rivers, lakes or aquifers is therefore of strategic importance. Cooperation between neighbouring countries will be strengthened by the creation or reinforcement of international basin organisations.

Boosting capacity through training

Reinforcing institutional capabilities, training and education of the various operators and users in water management, are recognised internationally as being priorities, the importance of which was also underlined by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This demands strong political will (on the part of the governments and local authorities) and long-term financial participation.

Facilitate a better projects ownership through harmonized financing

In order to facilitate project implementation and hence greater operator ownership, a significant harmonization work regarding the procedures is under way between those European donors likely to be co-financing large-scale projects in the Mediterranean. This particular approach is part of the financing of sector programs which allow for more flexibility in the use of local project management.