

GWP-Med – Highlights for the period September to November 2009

- i. Contributing to the development of the new Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean
- ii. Launching of the Drin Dialogue: Towards a shared vision on transboundary waters in the Western Balkans
- iii. Assisting the preparation of the Assessment of the Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Ground waters in Southeastern Europe
- iv. Tunisia: Contributing to the promotion of IWRM knowledge
- v. Egypt: Expanding activities on water financing

GWP-Med highly contributed to the preparations of the 2008 Jordan Ministerial Conference in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI). In that context, it drafted the Ministerial background papers on Water Governance and on Climate Change Adaptation; provided technical and administrative assistance to the meeting of the Mediterranean and SEE Water Directors to review texts of the Ministerial (June 2008); and co-organised the Civil Society Conference (December 2008) to formulate the stakeholders' views and declaration to the Ministerial.



I. CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGY FOR WATER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water (22 December 2008, Jordan) decided the elaboration of a new long term **Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM)**. The four main themes of the SWM are: water governance, water and climate change adaptation, water demand management and water financing. The task of elaborating the SWM has been delegated to the Water Expert Group (WEG) having as members representatives at the level of Water Director from the Mediterranean countries; regional institutions and organizations participate as observers. The process develops in the political framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

In September 2009, the WEG mandated the MED EUWI Secretariat, which is served by GWP-Med, to provide administrative and technical support and assistance to the WEG Co-Chairing countries in the UfM framework. In that context, GWP-Med continued providing support to the process under the MED EUWI framework by:

- assisting with the drafting of the SWM Terms of Reference that were presented by Greece and Spain to the WEG and agreed upon in September 2009;

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- providing support for the organization of WEG 1 Meeting (Athens, 7-8 September 2009) and WEG 2 Meeting (Cairo, 4 November 2009) that progressed the agenda of the SWM elaboration;
- assisting Spain in its role as coordinator of the Technical Drafting Group (TDG) that was formed with 14 members of the WEG to prepare the SWM texts.

Furthermore, GWP-Med directly assists the drafting of the SWM Chapter on Water Governance that is coordinated by Greece and Lebanon and the SWM Chapter on Climate Change Adaptation and Water that is coordinated by Morocco and Greece.

In addition, GWP-Med co-organised the major multi-stakeholder **Egyptian / Dutch Regional Conference ‘Towards the new Long Term Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean, 2-3 November 2009, in Cairo.** The Conference was invited by the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. It was organized by the Egyptian / Dutch Advisory Panel on Water Management (APP), Co-Operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC), GWP-Med and MED EUWI. The Conference was attended by more than 270 participants from most of the countries of the Mediterranean. In conjunction, a Civil Society Conference and a Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development were co-organized by MIO-ECSDE, GWP-Med, RAED and others on 1 December 2009. In an interactive manner that included plenary and break-out thematic sessions, discussion panels and high-level speeches, the events discussed in depth the four themes of the SWM providing valuable material to the formal process for the elaboration of the

Strategy. Furthermore, the Conference agreed on the Cairo Message on ‘Coping with Climate Change is Managing Water for Life’ that is a regional contribution to COP 15 discussions.

Follow up activities aim at assisting with effectively delivering the SWM that is planned to be agreed upon during the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water, 12-14 April 2010, Barcelona. This includes assisting Spain in coordinating preparation of texts, support to WEG and TDG, etc.

II. LAUNCHING OF THE DRIN DIALOGUE: TOWARDS A SHARED VISION ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Following systematic preparations that started in 2008, representatives of the ministries responsible for water management in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, the Lake Skadar/Shkoder Commission, the Lake Ohrid Committee and stakeholders from the Prespa Lake Basin met on 1 December 2009 in Podgorica, Montenegro, and launched the Drin Dialogue.



Facilitated by UNECE and GWP-Med using the platform of the UNECE Water Convention, the Drin

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Dialogue is a structured consultation process that aims to develop a shared vision among the riparian countries and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin.

The Drin Basin covers a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (under UN Security Council resolution 1244). The Drin River is the “connecting body” of this water system, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance. The region is very rich in endemic species and exceptional in terms of biodiversity conservation, and so has great potential for the development of sustainable tourism.



The meeting established a coordinating body, the Drin Core Group, which will be composed of representatives of the ministries responsible for water management in the riparian countries as well as the formal and informal joint structures established in the shared sub-basins (the Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder Lakes), UNECE, GWP-Med and NGOs. As the agencies supporting the initiative,

the European Commission, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and UNDP/GEF will be invited to participate as observers and further support the process.

Based on a rich set of assessment, consultation and trust-building activities, it is expected that an agreed shared vision will be developed by the end of 2011.

III. ASSISTING THE PREPARATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS, LAKES AND GROUND WATERS IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

GWP-Med prepared under the coordination and responsibility of the UNECE Secretariat the drafts of the Assessment of the Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Ground waters in Southeastern Europe. The Assessment addressed all major water bodies shared by two or more of the following countries based on material provided by them: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. There are 13 major transboundary rivers and four major international lakes as well as 50 transboundary aquifers in SEE.

Three meetings provided input to the preparation of the Assessment: 18-20 May 2009 – Sarajevo, 10-11 June 2009 – Bratislava and 8-9 July 2009 – Geneva. The Assessment was presented and provided key background document at the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and International Lakes, 10-12 November 2009. The Assessment is

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currently under a comments provision period by the Parties for the Convention.

IV. TUNISIA: CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROMOTION OF IWRM KNOWLEDGE

Contributing to the promotion of IWRM in Tunisia and following the formal request of the Water Resources Department of the Tunisian Ministry for Irrigation and Hydraulic Resources, a Training Course on IWRM was co-organised by GWP-Med, UNEP-UCC/DHI and the Ministry, 12-15 October 2009, in Tunis.

The Course was attended by 17 water managers and engineers from the headquarters and the regional offices of the Water Resources Department. The Course aimed to familiarise the participants with the IWRM and Strategic Water Planning frameworks and equip them with the necessary tools towards the successful implementation of such processes at national level. The Course paid attention to the country specificities also with reference to extreme events and coastal management in view of climate change implications. It developed with specialised presentations, working group sessions and plenary discussions. A separate half-day session was held on the GWP Toolbox coupled with a group exercise using the Toolbox and the accompanying group presentations. Examples from the region and beyond and presentations from the African Development Bank and the African Water Facility were also included in the training. Extensive material on IWRM was distributed to the participants, including the GWP Toolbox CD and the TEC Papers' CD, while hardcopies of the TEC Documents and Policy Briefs were available during the Course. The Course was conducted in French.

Lively discussions were held throughout the course, as the participants were keen on understanding better the range of provided information, with particular emphasis on the need for an IWRM Plan in Tunisia and the steps that have been already taken in this respect. It is interesting to note that many of the participants considered that some of the existing water frameworks represent aspects of an IWRM Plan, but stressed the urgent need for better and more effective coordination among the involved institutions.



Following the successful completion of the IWRM Training Course, the Tunisian Ministry (through the Water Director, Mr. Mekki Hamza) expressed the desire to further the cooperation with GWP-Med in the field of IWRM. Tunisia is a country well-advanced with regard to water infrastructure and the exploitation of all available water resources, but the authorities consider useful to evaluate how well Tunisia complies with the IWRM framework and the incorporation of IWRM principles in water resources management at local and national levels.

To this end, GWP-Med is currently exploring modalities for conducting a preliminary assessment on the above with the cooperation of UNEP UCC/DHI, the co-involvement of the African Water Facility and under the guidance of the Tunisian Ministry. The suggested methodology will be the

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established and tested work of UN Water and GWP on Road-mapping for Advancing IWRM Processes. The envisaged commencing date for the activity is early 2010.

V. EGYPT: EXPANDING ACTIVITIES ON WATER FINANCING

Within the MED EUWI framework, work continued intensively in Egypt on the theme of private sector involvement in the water sector with the cooperation of the Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD), under the leadership of the Egyptian Holding Company for Water and Wastewater. During October and November 2009 work consisted of collecting related Questionnaires from key stakeholders and compiling the responses in an assessment document to be discussed among key official stakeholders and private sector representatives.

The first draft of the assessment will be ready by mid-December and the informal consultation event is scheduled for the 11th January 2010. The activity aims to clarify the potentials and risks from involving the private sector in water services, following especially the findings of the National Master Plan for Water and Wastewater (completed in July 2009) that identified a long list of needed projects, the financing of which cannot rely solely on public budget contribution.

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