

Union for the Mediterranean Water Expert Group - Fourth Meeting

18th May 2011
Barcelona, Spain

CONCLUSIONS

The Fourth Meeting of the Water Expert Group (WEG) of the Union for the Mediterranean was held on May 18th 2011, at the Palau de Pedralbes in Barcelona, Spain. It was chaired by the Environment & Water Division of the UfM Secretariat and included representatives from Albania, Algeria, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Palestine, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, the European Commission, the Arab league, and was also attended by the representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

A. Preamble

The Water Experts Group (WEG) is tasked with the implementation of the provisions included in the Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water held at the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 22 December 2008.

The First Meeting of the Water Expert Group (7-8 September 2009, Athens, Greece) decided, among others, on the establishment of a Technical Drafting Group (TDG) to work on the drafting of a Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) aiming for a structured and inclusive process under the political and technical guidance of the WEG. MED EUWI provided administrative assistance to the process in coordination with the UfM Co-Chairs.

The TDG was chaired by Spain and composed of Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Croatia, the European Commission and the League of Arab States. The TDG met for the first time on 26 October 2009, and for the second time on 3-4 February 2010, in Madrid, Spain.

The Second Water Expert Group met on 4 November 2009, in Cairo, Egypt and the Third Water Expert Group met on 25 February 2010, in Madrid, Spain.

All participants recognize and thank Spain and MED-EUWI for their hard work in earlier WEG and TDG meetings.

B. The Water Expert Group was informed on:

1. The establishment and institutionalization of the UfM Secretariat and the Environment and Water Division during 2010.
2. The 2011 Work Programme of the Environment and Water Division approved by the UfM Senior Officials in December 2010.
3. The role and responsibilities of the WEG according to the Water Ministerial Declaration (Jordan 2008).
4. The Project Guidelines approved by the UfM Senior Officials in April 2011.
5. The background and current Status of the UfM Project Pipeline for the Water Sector.
6. Information provided by several WEG members on their projects.
7. Presentation of EU funded regional projects in the field of Water in the Mediterranean region (under ENPI) and Horizon 2020.
8. Future considerations for technical collaborative work on Water Issues in the Union for the Mediterranean with the presentation of several scenarios by the UfM Secretariat.

C. The Water Expert Group took note of:

1. The technical mandate bestowed on the UfM Secretariat by the Paris Joint Declaration of the UfM Heads of State and Government (July 2008), the Marseille Meeting of Foreign Ministers (November 2008) and the Statutes adopted by UfM Senior Officials Meeting (March 2010).
2. The mandate and tasks entrusted to the Water Expert Group (WEG) by the Jordan Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water (December 2008), and as further detailed at the first WEG Meeting (September 2009).

D. The Water Expert Group agreed to:

1. Continue to seek political guidance from Co-Presidency/SOM on how and/or when to proceed with regards to the preparation of draft Action Plan. The Technical Drafting Group will be available to continue to work on the Action Plan, as and when needed.
2. Work with the UfM Secretariat and with the technical support of the MED EUWI Secretariat to develop a draft work plan for WEG for the rest of 2011 & 2012 in accordance with the Jordan Ministerial Declaration on Water (December 2008) and follow up on the other tasks defined by the said Declaration.

3. Support the UfM Secretariat in the attainment of its technical mandate of identifying, development and concretization of projects, with technical expertise and advice, whenever needed and possible, in order to support a more transparent and effective project appraisal/review process by the Secretariat.
4. In order to assess the projects received, the general criteria and guidelines adopted by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) should be further detailed in line with the Water Ministerial Declaration (Jordan 2008), other relevant approved documents and E&W Division priorities detailed in the Secretariat Workplan for 2011. Further, urge the promoters of projects already submitted to resubmit them according to the UfM provided project fiche taking into account the Project Guidelines.
5. Support the organization of technical workshops for WEG members in order to enable Governments, Civil Society and other Stakeholders in the development of joint regional, sub-regional and trans-national project proposals (using the agreed concept of Variable Geometry).
6. Support the organization of workshops to exchange and encompass best practice in water resource management, water and sanitation services and joint project development.
7. Keep in close coordination, through the UfM Secretariat, with the EU Water Initiative, the Arab Water Strategy, where applicable, and other related strategic initiatives, programmes and frameworks in order to ensure harmonization and complementarity.
8. Within the realm of projects sought by the Environment & Water Division of the UfM Secretariat, recommend to SOM to incorporate project proposals from the agriculture sector that may contribute significantly to preservation and better utilization of water resources.
9. Propose to the SOM the labelization of the project of desalination for Gaza. Indicate to the SOM that a number of projects have been presented corresponding with the four thematic priorities of the Water Ministerial Declaration (Jordan 2008). The corresponding list of projects will be available on the web site of the UfM Secretariat. We recall the need to address, as expressed in Jordan, to strengthen the coordination and synergies between the existing Mediterranean initiatives and networks on information and expertise.