

Comité de Suivi (CdS)

Promoting Sustainable Development within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership



Friends of the Earth MedNet
Rue Blanche 15
B- 1050 Brussels
Belgium
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The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH



Copied to:
Monsieur Jean Asselborn, Vice-Premier Ministre, Ministre des Affaires étrangères
et de l'Immigration du Luxembourg.
Dr. Ursulla Plassnik, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria.
Ms. Margot Wallstrom Vice President of the European Commission and
Commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication.
Dr. Benita Ferrero Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations.
Mr. Stravos Dimas, European Commissioner for the Environment.
Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, President of the European Parliament.



**Friends of
the Earth
MedNet**

Dear Minister

As the UK Presidency of the European Union gets underway I am writing to you on behalf of the Comité de Suivi* to draw your attention to our immediate concerns and proposals for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the issue of sustainable development in the Mediterranean ecoregion.



You will be aware that the Mediterranean environmental NGO coalition – the Comité de Suivi - a network of seven regional networks representing several hundred EU and south Mediterranean environment NGOs focusing on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – has expressed dismay in a letter of 4 May to European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, as well as in press releases on 6 and 24 June at the lack of coherence between European Commission and EU actions and statements regarding the Mediterranean environment.



With regards to the Barcelona VII agreed conclusions of May 30-31 concerning sustainable development and particularly its environmental pillar, the Ministers have not paid the due attention, nor taken adequate action so as to reverse the unsustainable development patterns witnessed in the first 10 years of the



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Partnership. Although the then forthcoming Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) is referred to and recognised as an important vehicle for mainstreaming sustainable development throughout the Partnership it is not linked with the Ministers' commitment to "depollute the Mediterranean by 2020". Nor is there any reference to the extensive ongoing and agreed future depollution activities within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (managed by the UN Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan – UNEP/MAP - through its six Regional Activity Centres).

The MSSD was adopted on 22 June by the UNEP/MAP advisory body, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) at its conference in Athens, and transmitted to the 22 Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention for formal adoption by the ministerial segment of their 14th conference in Portoroz, Slovenia (8-11 November). The Strategy covers seven priority fields of action to achieve sustainable development in the region, with activities to be benchmarked against 33 indicators and reviewed every two years. The European Community, represented by the European Commission and seven Mediterranean Member States – France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus - are members of the MCSD and Contracting Parties to the Convention.

The lack of clearly expressed coherent links between the EuroMed Foreign Ministers' commitment to "depollute the Mediterranean by 2020" and the implementation of the MSSD gives the impression that although the EU and 13 South and East Mediterranean states are committed to one set of objectives, actions and time-bound targets and programmes within the MSSD, the EC is proposing to launch a series of negotiations for adoption of a different set of targets and actions relating to the issues already addressed in the MSSD, which they wish to see endorsed as a separate initiative by the 10th Anniversary proposed Heads of Government Summit in Barcelona in November this year.

The Comité de Suivi advocates that any Commission proposals for Mediterranean de-pollution should support and enhance actions already agreed within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and be in line with the objectives of **the MSSD. This Strategy should in our view receive the formal endorsement of the 10th Anniversary Summit of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Barcelona, 27-28 November.** A separate EU or Euromed initiative on Mediterranean de-pollution would serve no useful purpose.

We NGOs advocate that environmental conditionality has to be applied to the disbursement of the EuroMediterranean Partnership's financial instrument MEDA II and to the European Investment Bank's Mediterranean lending facility (FEMIP) as well the proposed European Neighbourhood financial instrument to **make disbursement of funds for EuroMed partner countries` national and regional development plans, dependent on the incorporation of environmental and sustainable development criteria in their planning.** The European Commission needs to play its part as well by providing more funding towards promotion of sustainable development nationally and regionally. In this regard the Commission should support pilot-national

projects in the South and Eastern Mediterranean countries, which demonstrate the benefits of a sustainable development approach to the future of Mediterranean citizens.

In the field of cooperation, one of the essential requirements for launching sustainable development in the region and successfully implementing the MSSD resides in improved co-ordination between the EMP and the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which services the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. We understand that the matter of improved working relations has been under discussion for some months now, on the basis of MAP proposals submitted to the Commission. We NGOs therefore propose that **a protocol should be elaborated between the European Commission and the MAP, to facilitate this collaboration and that it be formally endorsed by the 10th Anniversary Summit.**

Furthermore, Mediterranean environmental NGOs call on the UK Presidency to take the initiative to promote the use of existing instruments and new approaches to ensure greater environmental mainstreaming in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In particular the EuroMed environmental integration strategy adopted by 2nd Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of the Environment in Athens in June 2002 and endorsed by subsequent EuroMed foreign ministers' conferences needs to be energetically implemented. Formally implementing the EuroMed environmental integration strategy into priority economic sectoral EMP programmes and activities such as energy, transport, industry, water, and agriculture, to be periodically reviewed by foreign minister's conference has to become a reality if substantive progress is to be made in making sustainable development the guiding principle of the EuroMed partnership.

An additional the Comité de Suivi concern is the European Commission advocacy, reflected in the wording of the Barcelona VII Agreed Conclusions, for accelerated trade liberalisation in industrial and agricultural goods and services to achieve a full Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA) by 2010 without any mention of incorporating into the related negotiating process the recommendations due at the end of 2006 of the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of the EMFTA which the European Commission itself has contracted to Manchester University.

Furthermore, we consider that the lack of formal commitment by Barcelona VII to achieve all the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the region by 2015 is a grave omission and quite out of sync. With the forthcoming UN High Level Review of the MDGs in September.

We NGOS also believe that given the recent entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and the actual and predicted negative impacts of climate change on the Mediterranean basin, **the 10th anniversary summit of the EuroMediterranean Partnership should formally launch a regional climate change strategy, in co-operation with MAP.**

Finally, I would kindly request your written response to this letter so as to share with us your views on the proposals made above.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Eugene Clancy
Mediterranean Programme Coordinator
Friends of the Earth Europe
Rue Blanche 15
B 1050 Brussels

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*Members of the Comite de Suivi are: Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), Environment and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Friends of the Earth (FoE/MedNet Programme), Mediterranean NGO Network for Ecology and Sustainable Development (MEDForum), Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), World Wide Fund for Nature Mediterranean Programme (WWF/MEDPO)

The Press release and the letter to President Barroso and the NGO Press release commenting on the outcome of the Foreign Ministers' conference is at:

<http://www.foeeurope.org/press/basic.htm>

The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, was drafted by the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, an advisory body of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). (<http://www.unepmap.gr>). The MAP services the Barcelona Convention 1976 and its Protocols. The MCSD adopted the MSSD at its 10th conference in Athens 20-22 June. The text is posted on the MAP website: <http://www.unepmap.gr>