



Comité de Suivi Paper on the "Horizon-2020" initiative

The environmental NGO coalition – the Comité de Suivi (CdS)- an alliance of seven regional NGO networks has been working together on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership since 1997. We welcome this opportunity to participate in this high-level environment meeting here in Barcelona and contribute to the discussion on the so-called "Horizon-2020" initiative to depollute the Mediterranean.



The Comité de Suivi- welcomed in its recent press statement on the 10th Anniversary Summit, the EuroMed partnership's commitment to implement the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), which NGOs have supported. The Comité de Suivi has also welcomed the commitment to work with UNEPs Mediterranean Action Plan in developing a roadmap to launch the new "Horizon-2020" depollution initiative. We environmental NGOs will actively contribute to this initiative.



In our recent review of 10 years of the EuroMed partnership the Comité de Suivi states that concerning sustainable development and particularly its environmental pillar, not enough attention has been paid, nor adequate action taken to reverse the unsustainable development patterns witnessed in this period. A number of important ministerial commitments have been made, but have failed to materialise in practical implementation measures. For example, and in particular the EuroMed Environmental Integration Strategy adopted by the 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 this EuroMed Environmental Integration Strategy into priority economic sectoral Euro-Mediterranean Partnership programmes and activities such as energy, transport, industry, water, and agriculture (to be periodically reviewed by the Foreign Minister's conferences) has to become a reality for substantive progress in making sustainable development the guiding principle of the EuroMed partnership.



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The Comité de Suivi congratulates DG Environment for ensuring the highest-level political support for the initiative to depollute the Mediterranean by 2020. The cleaning up of the Mediterranean is an important piece of the jigsaw that we need to piece together to deliver sustainable development in the region. It should also help to deliver some important goals of the thematic fields of action of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), which was recognised by Mediterranean Heads of State and Government as an important vehicle for mainstreaming sustainable development throughout the Partnership. The Comité de Suivi has advocated and continues to do so, that any Commission proposals for Mediterranean de-pollution should not lead to a separate Euromed initiative on Mediterranean de-pollution but support, enhance and complement relevant actions already agreed within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and be in line with the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy For Sustainable Development.



There is therefore an obvious need to identify clearly and express the coherent links between the commitment to depollute the Mediterranean by 2020 and the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy For Sustainable Development and notably its related SAP MED, based on National Action Plans elaborated by its 21 Contracting Parties. In the implementation of the National Action Plans the role of the NGOs has to be central, supported by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership mechanism. We should ensure that "Horizon-2020" stakeholders are committed to one set of objectives, actions and time-bound targets and programmes, coherent with those of the Mediterranean Strategy For Sustainable Development. A first step in aligning the 2020 initiative with the



Mediterranean Strategy For Sustainable Development is to recognise the extensive ongoing and agreed future depollution activities within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, managed by UNEP/MAP's, MEDPOL and other Regional Activity Centres. With this in mind, we warmly welcome the cooperation agreement signed recently between the European Commission and MAP.

At the same time the 2020 initiative has to be coherent with the recently launched EU Marine Environment Thematic Strategy. That strategy aims at the protection and enhancement of the ecological quality and biodiversity of the marine environment and defines common qualitative protection objectives. The goal of course should be to tackle all the major sources of pollution including industrial emissions, municipal waste and particularly urban wastewater. The goal should also be to conserve and restore pollution abatement functions of ecosystems such as water basins and coastal wetlands. We NGOs also firmly believe that it would be both logical and pertinent that the 2020 initiative be operationally linked also with the National Strategies for Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean countries and relevant work of the IMO. A precise "Horizon-2020" roadmap planning the implementation of the horizon initiative needs to be formulated, establishing clear links with existing mechanisms, policies and strategies, clearly defining stakeholder processes, institutional responsibilities, as well as stating precise objectives, targets, deadlines and means.

We also need a clear definition of the depollution initiative – so that we are all talking about the same thing and we are working in the same direction. However we define the initiative, it must be ambitious and achievable. We already clearly have the highest political support for "Horizon-2020", so we need to ensure that the financial resources match our ambitions. In this respect the proposed European Neighbourhood and partnership Instrument will have an important role to play as well as the European Investment Bank and eventually other bodies. The financial implications of depolluting the Mediterranean are formidable, so a clear strategy needs to be in place to mobilise the necessary funds. European overseas development agencies need to take up this challenge and we NGOs are particularly anxious to hear from the Commission a clear analysis of how the European Neighbourhood And Partnership Instrument can best be used to implement the 2020 initiative, what limitations we can expect in this regard and what provisions are in place to remove obstacles. We do have some concerns in this regard. The Comité de Suivi believes the disbursement of European Neighbourhood And Partnership Instrument funds for EuroMed partner countries national and regional development plans, must be dependent on the incorporation of clear and measurable environmental and sustainable development criteria in their preparation. It is crucial for the Comité de Suivi to understand how the 2020 initiative will be combined with the future European Neighbourhood Policy regional programme on the environment. We expect this regional programme to ensure continuity with the current Euromed environmental programme, SMAP, in supporting issues such as freshwater or biodiversity. We also expect the European Commission to play its part by promoting the 2020 initiative in European Neighbourhood Policy action plans and by providing more funding towards promotion of sustainable development nationally. In this regard the Commission should support pilot-national projects in the South and Eastern Mediterranean countries and NGO activities that contribute to Mediterranean depollution.

On the issue of participation and contributions to the 2020 initiative, we NGOs wish to repeat our opinion that effective implementation requires the active participation of all stakeholders and actors. All the actors in the Mediterranean should recognise their common but differentiated responsibility vis á vis the "Horizon-2020" initiative. The environmental NGO community, active in a wide range of sustainable development,

environmental policies and action-oriented initiatives, is eager and willing to play its role in the planning and implementation of the 2020 initiative provided that the legal framework(s) and the necessary funds are in place. At the same time we call on all the other actors and in particular the EuroMediterranean partners to demonstrate in word and deed their commitment to achieving depollution of the Mediterranean by 2020. Each stakeholder needs to assume responsibility for contributing to the successful implementation of the initiative. This could be in the form of:

- The completion of ratification procedures and enforcement of the Barcelona convention and its protocols.
- Financial support to MAP regional activity centres for undertaking 2020 initiative tasks;
- Secondment and twinning of professionals to MAP regional activity centres, the European Environment Agency, and relevant national and local authorities etc;
- Key stakeholders taking direct responsibility for leading and carrying out the tasks related to priority area of actions or crosscutting issues;
- The organisation of thematic working sessions and capacity building workshops on the "Horizon-2020" initiative.

It is a process that requires new ideas and impetus, high visibility and greater local ownership. The "Horizon-2020" initiative will need to devote substantial resources to mobilising and building the capacity of all pertinent actors: be they Governments, local authorities, the private sector and civil society to ensure their full participation. In particular, NGOs will require support to perform our important watchdog and visionary role. The adequate engagement of all key actors and the public in general, informed and educated from an early age, will generate the necessary shared political will and sense of ownership for the 2020 initiative to be successfully implemented in the Mediterranean. In this respect we want to reiterate the resolution of the recent Conference for the Launching of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in the Mediterranean region calling upon the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to support initiatives and projects on Education for Sustainable Development in the region.

As development and environmental NGOs, through our regional and international organisations, we have demonstrated again and again that we are in an excellent position to be able to mobilise national and local grassroots organisations in benefit of the "Horizon-2020" initiative. National and local environmental NGOs are in turn able to engage other categories of actors at the national and local levels to develop a greater understanding of the complexities of implementing the 2020 initiative locally and nationally in the Mediterranean basin.

A participatory approach in the planning and implementation of the 2020 depollution initiative based on good governance principles requires a series of mechanisms and processes to guarantee timely, transparent and full consultation with all parties. NGOs consider that the following proposals will facilitate all actors' participation:

- Electronic surveys and questionnaires
- Interactive Commission and MAP websites, allowing for online consultation, information access and transparent discussion contributing to "Horizon-2020" planning.
- Various regional consultative meetings
- Using the international meetings circuit, in particular the meetings of the SMAP and MAP focal points, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, the conferences of the Barcelona Contracting Parties to have *ad hoc* face-to-face consultations and debriefings.

- Establishing stakeholder forum groups (NGOs, focal points, Parliamentarians etc)
- Through Discussion papers

However, the inexistence of appropriate consultation mechanisms between NGOs and their respective government officials at the country level is currently a handicap to the implementation of the "Horizon-2020" initiative nationally.

Environmental problems in the Mediterranean region are serious. They are depleting its natural resources and affecting the quality of life of its inhabitants. The depollution initiative can make a difference, and it should. We call upon governments, the European Commission, international organisations and all other actors to make this work, for the benefit of the peoples of this region! We as environmental NGOs are ready to engage ourselves!

This paper has been produced by the
"Comite de Suivi"

- 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)

in addition, the following organisations present in Barcelona were involved:

- Legambiente, Italy
- Nature Trust, Malta
- IUCN Mediterranean
- Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association