



7th TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING (WG7)

MINUTES

PROGRESSING IN THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE WATER STRATEGY IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Valencia, Spain, 30th- 31st March 2017

The Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean (WSWM) was endorsed by Ministers in Algiers, 2015. In November 2016, the WSWM Action Plan was adopted, also at ministerial level, in Marrakech, in the margins of Climate Change COP 22. As foreseen in the Action Plan, the projects included therein should be implemented and monitored.

According to the 5+5 Water Rules of Procedure adopted also in Marrakech, the Ministerial Group on Water (MGW) of the 5+5 Dialogue shall supervise the implementation of the Action Plan and its working lines. They will be assisted by a Technical Working Group (WG), with the support of the Technical Secretariat (TS), operated by the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO).

The Technical Working Group was consequently convened on the 30th and 31st of March, 2017 (in WG7) with the objective of promoting and supervising the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as discussing a work plan for 2017 and 2018, to be further submitted to the MGW.

MEETING DEVELOPMENT

The WG7 was hosted by the Jucar River Basin Authority, whose president, Ms. María Ángeles Ureña, opened the session and welcomed all participants, thanking them for their attendance. Subsequently, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Eduardo Orteu, representing the Spanish Directorate for Water, who thanked the Jucar River Basin Authority for hosting the meeting and all participants. He apologised for the absence of Tunisia and thanked the Union for the Mediterranean for the economic support provided which facilitated the participation of representatives from the Maghreb countries.

Mr. Eduardo Orteu introduced the agenda and recalled the goal of the meeting, which was to set a common understanding to handle the future work and to put together proposals to draft a short term work plan that could be presented to Ministers by the end of the year.

Following this introduction, Mr. Ramiro Martínez, Coordinator of MENBO, presented the Action Plan and the Rules of Procedures document.

Subsequent to the intervention of MENBO, representatives of the Spanish Ministry of Defence reported on the 5+5 Defence Initiative. Their presentations were well received as a possible example for the 5 + 5 Water Initiative to follow. The participants emphasised the following ideas from the 5+5 Defence intervention to take into account: the flexibility and informality of their structure, pragmatism and simplicity in the organisation and coordination, voluntary participation, continuity, compatibility of soft activities with larger scale activities and the importance of having an own independent website .



The Union for the Mediterranean announced the Ministerial Conference on a Water Agenda for the Mediterranean to be held in Malta on 27 April 2017. It would be accompanied by a workshop on funding for the water sector in the Mediterranean. The UfM representative invited 5+5 members to participate in the workshop.

A debate on how to progress in the implementation of the Action Plan was then initiated. The main comments were the following:

- The difficulty of finding funds for projects was raised. Funding was highlighted as a priority.
- Several financing options were mentioned: on the one hand at national level, by using funds of the countries themselves; on the other hand at regional level, through the search of funds from regional donors. Other alternatives such as prices and public-private partnerships were also brought up.
- The possibility of prioritising a few projects of the Action Plan was introduced; to start implementation by choosing activities that are more affordable in terms of funding, such as training activities, or easier to implement.
- With regards to regional funding, the EU Neighbourhood Instrument was highlighted. It was proposed to explore the possibility of submitting one or two projects of major interest to this funding line.
- It was stressed, however, that the mandate of the Ministers is to implement the entire list of projects included in the Plan of Action, none should be ruled out.
- The representative of SWIM-H2020 SM Project offered this as a platform to share information and encouraged 5+5 delegates to participate in SWIM meetings with stakeholders and in other activities.
- The World Bank representative stressed that the water sector must improve in their efforts to attract funds from donors.

A technical thematic session on ensuring urban water supply in scarce environments followed. This thematic issue was highly welcome by most participants. The World Bank begun by presenting the Initiative on Water Scarce Cities and EMWIS followed explaining the situation of urban water supply in the Mediterranean basin. Both presentations raised much interest and discussion among the participants. The representatives of Spain, Morocco, Malta, Algeria and Portugal also exposed their experiences and challenges regarding this issue.

The second day was mostly devoted to the second part of the technical thematic session. Two round table discussions were organised. The first session focused on the operators' scope. Mancomunidad de Canales del Taibilla, Suez Advanced Solutions, WAREG and the OECD, chaired by IME, presented their initiatives and views regarding urban water supply. The main conclusions were that there was a need to establish a legislative and governance framework in order to coordinate actions, at all levels, and the role of private operators was also enhanced in providing water services. The need to find water resources from several origins, including non-conventional resources was also highlighted.



IME recalled the important event of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum, whose kick-off meeting is scheduled for the 11th of July.

The second round table was dedicated to the donors' scope. The session included the participation of the potential donors such as the World Bank, the European Commission, the Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco, the German and the Spanish International Cooperation Agencies GIZ and AECID, respectively. The session was chaired by IUCN-Med. The panellists exposed the funding instruments and mechanisms of their institutions and explained to what extent these available funding instruments could be adequate for the implementation of the Action Plan. As a conclusion, it was raised that funding was a key aspect that would deserve more attention and maybe an ad hoc session to continue exploring how to innovate financially as funds are being reduced.

The issue of water and peace and the relationship between cooperation on water in the Mediterranean and its implications for security in the region were also underlined. It was stated that more investment in the Mediterranean of the European Commission's Neighbourhood and Development Cooperation policies was needed, in consistency's sake with the European Union's external action and security strategies in the Mediterranean.

The EU External Action Service representative highlighted some current problems in the Mediterranean region and therefore expressed its support to the Dialogue 5+5 as a regional cooperation initiative and wished it success for the future.

The last session was devoted to the roadmap for 2017. The chairman, Eduardo Orteu, proposed as the next step that the Secretariat would prepare a draft work programme for 2017. This work programme could include new proposals for the Action Plan to help to give continuity to the initiative. In this respect, he asked participants to present proposals that could be added into the work programme. The draft work programme would be circulated for the participants' consideration. Portugal, Spain, Algeria and Morocco announced different initiatives that could be included in the work programme. In addition, SWIM and the World Bank reminded participants about the workshops that would take place in the short term in several 5+5 countries. The chairman proposed to convene the second technical meeting in autumn 2017, in order to close the work programme for 2018 before presenting it to the Ministers for its approval.

Finally, MENBO presented the dissemination plan, which included past international events where the 5+5 water initiative was publicised, as well as future events where to report about it as well.

The meeting concluded with the intervention of the chairman, Eduardo Orteu, who thanked all participants for their attendance and contributions.