

Action Plan and Working Methods of the COMPSUD

2nd Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)

and

2nd Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and prospects for the sustainable development of the region

13 December 2003
Traña Hotel
San Pedro del Pinatar, Spain

SYNTHESIS REPORT

Preamble

This report presents in a brief and concise way the results of the two dialogues, the 2nd Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the 2nd Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and prospects for the sustainable development of the region organised by MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med and hosted by the Regional Assembly of Murcia in San Pedro del Pinatar, Spain, on the 13th of December 2003.

The 2nd meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) was attended by 21 MPs and politicians from 13 different Mediterranean National Parliaments and countries. It was intended to come up with concrete proposals for the Action Plan and the Working Methods of the COMPSUD that would guarantee a concerted action of the Circle at regional and national levels as well as its effective functioning and wide spreading in the Parliaments of the region in the coming years.

The 2nd Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and prospects for the sustainable development of the region, was directed to stimulate a dialogue among various Mediterranean stakeholders that could add value and ideas for their work and particularly enhance the role of Parliamentarians in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development.

Single interventions of participants have not been included in this report, which actually focuses on the essence of the discussion. However, for those interested in receiving a complete record of both meetings (in English for the moment) this will be available very soon and can be obtained from the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat.

2nd Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)

Opening of the meeting

The Chairman of COMPSUD, HE. Mr. Juan Carlos Ruiz López, opened the meeting welcoming all present MPs. He thanked Prof. Michael Scoullos, MIO-ECSDE and GWP-MED for their cooperation and essential support for the functioning of COMPSUD and the meeting, Mr. Juan Canovas Cuenca, the President of the expert group of GWP-Med and President of the Water Confederation of the Segura River, as well as HE. Mr. Pedro José Perez Ruiz, Senator and mayor of the city hosting the meeting.

Foreword by the Chairman of COMPSUD, HE. Mr. Juan Carlos Ruiz

The Chairman reminded participants that the importance of the Circle lies in its attempt to opening debate among Parliamentarians and to get common conclusions leading to concerted actions and useful documents. It also stated that the Circle represents an important challenge and that its achievements will depend from the work of each MP involved in it. He stressed that everybody should give his/her best so that the Circle gets to fulfill the expectations that generates in the MPs of the Mediterranean basin.

The Chairman of COMPSUD, reiterated the commitment made by Parliamentarians during their first meeting in Athens in 2002, and he emphasized the need of further extending the Circle to many more MPs, of more countries and of more National Parliaments in the future.

Referring to the most central issue of the Circle, water, the Chairman proposed to define “Peace and Water” as a central slogan and a task for the Parliamentarians and COMPSUD. It also stressed on the importance of promoting dialogue around water issues and to assume “Water Peace” as the basis for commitment and the meeting point for all MPs.

Presenting to his colleagues the experience of Spain that, as many other Mediterranean countries suffers of an unbalanced distribution of water resources inside the country, the Chairman referred to the Spanish National Hydrological Plan, which he considers as the first historical approach to the concept of Integrated Management of Water Resources. He also stressed on the importance of the concept of Water Legality, i.e. the fact that a law approved by the Parliament ratifies the principles of the hydrological planning and management in Spain.

Talking about some of the complicated moments the plan has had the Chairman reiterated the importance of exchanging experiences among the MPs of the different countries of the Mediterranean that are sharing similar problems related to water resources management. He pointed out the importance of the Circle which may become a core for dialogue and debate and a way to promote the ideal of “Peace in Water” that he previously stated.

Report by the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat

Ms. Barbara Tomassini, on behalf of the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat, proceeded with a brief up-date of MPs about the COMPSUD and its development from its very start in Athens in 2002 when MPs present at the “Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other stakeholders on the Protection of the Mediterranean Environment and prospects for the Sustainable Development of the Region” agreed to form the Circle.

She referred to the status and minimum operational provisions of the Circle agreed in that occasion as well as to the proposals made for the follow-up of the Workshop of Parliamentarians.

She also presented the achievements of COMPSUD in its first year of life which include:

- s The formation of a Core Group of Parliamentarians having the aim to follow closely the developments of the Circle.
- s The drafting of the Commitment of the Circle by the Core group of MPs in English and the translation of this document in French by the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat.
- s The circulation of the Commitment to the MPs present at the December 2002 Workshop and to other MPs and European Parliamentarians concerned by water, environment and sustainable development issues.
- s The signing of the Commitment by 21 representatives of 9 National Parliaments and the expression of interest about the Circle by numerous more MPs that have not yet signed the Commitment but who will probably do so in the near future.

Presentation of the Background Document by the Chairman of MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med, Prof. Michael Scoullos

Prof. Michael Scoullos, Chairman of MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med reiterated the importance of the water and peace issue stated by the Chairman of COMPSUD and invited the present MPs to focus on the most important part of the meeting, the discussion on the operational priorities and action plan of the Circle and on its working methods.

He briefly presented to participants the background document that had been drafted (in English and French) and circulated to them several days before.

Among the issues presented in the document, that had been already identified as important issues for the intervention of MPs during the first meeting of the Circle and from the correspondence and contacts throughout the year 2003 there is of course water management, but also water and education, water and poverty.

Prof. M. Scoullos went on presenting some of the on-going initiatives related to these topics to which MPs could grant their support at regional and national level, so that their effectiveness can be improved and duplications avoided. He referred to the efforts made, among others by UNEP/MAP, the Blue Plan and GWP-Med, to prepare for the non-EU countries and in particular for the Southern and Eastern part of the Mediterranean a 'framework' that could be 'compatible' to the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and could be promoted little by little in these regions through the initiative of the countries and other stakeholders. He pointed out that this is actually one important issue in the political agenda of the entire Mediterranean and a wish expressed by many water Ministers and environmental Ministers of these regions, particularly in view of the establishment of a MFTZ by the year 2010. He also stressed on the fact that the role of Parliamentarians in this framework could be to inform their colleagues about this dynamic process and help preparing the prerequisites in each country for such an approach.

Prof. M. Scoullos cited a further initiative, the Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative (Med EUWI) stressing on the fact that the COMPSUD should become part of the Multi Stakeholders Forum that exists as a body of this component: various representatives of the civil society as well as governments, are part of the Forum but not yet Parliamentarians.

He also provided brief information about the Euro-Med Water and Poverty Facility and the Mediterranean Educational Initiative MEDIES that Parliamentarians could support and promote through their respective Parliaments.

Inviting the present MPs to discuss also on the working methods of the Circle, Prof. M. Scoullos referred in particular to the means of communication to be adopted by the Circle as well as to the ways of raising the profile of the Circle. He proposed to circulate a letter from the Chair and the Core group through the participants to their national Parliaments but also to the European Parliament and to other existing Circles, like the Globe, the Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Euro-Arab cooperation Parliamentary Association etc. That would provide information about the functioning of the group and set the basis for eventual cooperation with these other networks/groups. He also suggested that the types of interventions by MPs at their national level could include for example a list of intentions of the circle to organize sub-regional or national meetings with other Stakeholders or to invite GWP that works in the area for the establishment of Country Water Partnerships.

Action Plan and Working Methods of COMPSUD

The discussion on the Action Plan and Working Methods of COMPSUD has been a very stimulating one, characterized by numerous interventions, suggestions and proposals coming from virtually all the participants.

Notes about each one of the interventions have been kept by the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat.

At the end of the discussion Prof. M. Scoullos was invited by the Chairman HE. Mr. J.C. Ruiz López to present to participants the conclusions of the meeting. These included some of the central points raised and issues recurring in many of the interventions that the Chairman and Prof. M. Scoullos, had been able to capture during the meeting and on the basis of notes. These conclusions were opened to dialogue and the few additions made by the participants have been included in the final presentation given below.

Before starting with the presentation of results, Prof. M. Scoullos considered opportune to provide some brief information, especially for the participants who were not present at the first meeting of Parliamentarians in 2002, about MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med, which support COMPSUD.

He explained that GWP-Med is a network of networks composed by partners such as the Governments (represented by the Blue Plan), CEDARE (Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe), CIHEAM (International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies), the EIC (Euro-Mediterranean Irrigators Community), the IME (Mediterranean Institute for Water), where almost all experts on water around the Mediterranean are included, the MedCities (Mediterranean Cities Network) the Med Wet (Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative), the MEMBO/REMOC (Mediterranean Network of the Basin Organizations in the Mediterranean), MIO-ECSDE (the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development), the umbrella of the Non Governmental Organizations in the Mediterranean, the MWN (Mediterranean Water Network) and SEMIDE as well as other organizations.

He reminded all the presents that the legacy of last year was to envisage the action of the Circle of Parliamentarians complementarily to the action of these other networks and platforms to which the Circle can add considerable value.

From the discussion it became apparent that among the **Priorities for the Action Plan** of the Circle should be:

s "Water as a catalyst for Peace".

s The promotion of Transboundary Cooperation on Water issues.

s The furthering of IWRM principles in national laws through legislation where the Parliaments have an active role or initiative.

- s The promotion of the initiatives described in the Background Document, namely the Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative (MedEUWI), the Euro-Mediterranean Water and Poverty Facility (WPF), the Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment & Sustainability–MEDIES.
- s Water as a right.
- s Particular attention to water issues in relation to women.
- s Water and poverty (also in combination with the population issue).
- s The inclusion of the issue of waste, both liquid effluents and solid wastes, in the priorities of the Circle, particularly since waste is closely linked with the water issue.
- s Emphasis on appropriate Education and further exploitation of the Educational Package on Water in the Mediterranean.
- s Importance of Public Awareness and of the role of Civil Society in this endeavor. It was also stated that this should be used to inform and sensitize Parliamentarians and other Decisions Makers.
- s COMPSUD to be assisted by background work and material from Research Institutions and Academia.

The following **Means and Methods** were identified as appropriate for the implementation of the Action Plan:

- s COMPSUD Members to be involved in discussions concerning water and environment in their National Parliaments in order to inform and enlighten their colleagues.
- s Assisting in creating special Commissions of MPs within the Parliaments on Environment and Sustainable Development where they don't exist already.
- s Asking for the creation of a Special technical Committee inside Parliaments to provide information in a neutral way and drawing the attention of the Parliamentarians about dossiers/bills on issues that seem not to contribute to sustainable development.
- s Working on Sustainability Impact Assessment, particularly in view of the MFTZ, with emphasis on water.
- s Compiling a list of Chairmen of National Committees for Environment and Sustainable Development in order to improve the communication of the Circle and its members with them.
- s Enlarging the COMPSUD inviting more members and raising its profile.

- s Assisting in the information and awareness raising of other MPs and Decision Makers in cooperation with NGOs.
- s It was mentioned that there is a need to have a newsletter, if possible in various languages. This could include information about what is happening in several Parliaments on the Environment and Sustainable Development issue as well as other critical information. A specific recommendation about a three- or four-monthly newsletter was made but this may depend on the available funds.
- s Internet (web-site, e-mails, etc.) was mentioned as an important means of communication.
- s Printed material (in as many Mediterranean languages as possible) also considered very important, in particular to reach those members that have not access to internet yet.
- s Synergies with existing pertinent bodies, i.e. the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, Parliamentarians for Global Action, etc. to be furthered.
- s Cooperation with International Organizations, the UNESCO Hydrological Programme, Academic and Research Institutions and other Institutions.
- s The need to work closer and collaborate with media and the Circle of Journalists was confirmed.

Prof. M. Scoullos stressed on the fact that there hasn't been any particular discussion about how to finance these actions so far. He proposed Parliamentarians and Members of COMPSUD to act in two ways relating to this matter. One way is ensuring funds for specific activities, like the offer provided from Morocco (HE. Mr. A. Zaidi) for translations or printing of specific materials (like the Educational package on water in the Mediterranean) or the offer coming from the Marmara Group Foundation from Turkey to support the next meeting of COMPSUD. However, he stated, there is the need for financial support even at the level of operation of the Circle and this could be done, for example, if some support to the Secretariat could be provided for this purpose.

Prof. M. Scoullos offered to circulate in the coming months a study for funding and operation of the Circle that will be open to comments by the members and then decisions by the Core group and implementation.

Continuing with the presentation of conclusions, Prof. M. Scoullos welcomed the offer of SEMIDE, through Dr. Canovas, to facilitate the communication of the Circle.

He also stated that GWP-Med and MIO-ECSDE confirm their willingness to continue the current facilitation of COMPSUD.

As far as the next meeting of COMPSUD, he stated that, as agreed by the Circle, this will be held in Turkey in one year time approximately. The dates for the next meeting will be selected so to allow also Parliamentarians from the EU Mediterranean countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus etc.) to attend, since this time, the dates of the meeting coincided with the discussion in the various National Parliaments about the budget for the following year and this, among other reasons, prevented the participation of EU Parliamentarians to the present meeting.

Closing of the meeting

The meeting was closed by the Chairman of COMPSUD, HE. Mr. J.C. Ruiz López , who set himself at the disposal of the Circle for continuing to chair it and invited anybody interested in joining the Core group and work for the Circle to do so.

2nd Mediterranean Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, NGOs and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and prospects for the sustainable development of the region.

Opening of the meeting

HE. Mr. Pedro Jose Ruiz, Member of the Spanish Senate and Mayor of San Pedro del Pinatar who hosted the meeting, welcomed all participants.

He stressed on the importance for water to become a source of communication, of peace and a means through which ideas among different countries and different people can be exchanged.

Foreword by the Chairman of MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med, Prof. Michael Scoullos

Prof. M. Scoullos thanked once again the Senator and Mayor of the city for hosting the second regional dialogue and expressed his wish for keeping this important dialogue alive.

He reminded, especially for those who were not present at the first regional dialogue organized in Athens in 2002 that the rationale behind the organization of such a Dialogue consist in the recognition of the importance of creating synergies among all various sectors of the society and stakeholders for the promotion of Sustainable Development.

This was recognized already in RIO, in 1992 and reiterated 10 years after in Johannesburg. It was stressed also in Kyoto, during the 3rd World Water Forum.

Referring specifically to the situation in the Mediterranean, Prof. M. Scoullos said that despite of the problems, conflicts and historically accumulated problems, this region also presents some unique examples of coexistence and understanding and that the environment has been always one of the fields that brought people together.

It is important to go one step further in this dialogue that has water at its center, so that this resource can become a bridge and a catalyst for peace and not for conflicts.

Prof. M. Scoullos also spoke about existing strong regional organizations in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP and MCSD, GWP-Med and its partner organizations/networks) that bring their membership from the various sectors and countries together and created the needed synergies and basis for dialogue among the different stakeholders.

He reiterated the importance of the COMPSUD, the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development, for enriching this on-going dialogue and for being a 'pioneering' initiative, a model which, if successful, could be transferred from the Mediterranean to other regions of the world too.

Presentation of the results of the discussion on the Action Plan and Working Methods of COMPSUD by the Chairman of the Circle, HE. Mr. Juan Carlos Ruiz López

The results of the first session were presented to the participants by the Chairman of COMPSUD, HE. Mr. Juan Carlos Ruiz López.

The Chairman added up to the conclusions the importance of promoting the merging or other form of effective combination of Ministries responsible for Environmental issues with those working on Water issues, since Environmental and water issues are still approached separately in many Mediterranean countries although they are and should be very much interlinked.

He also stressed on the fact that the COMPSUD is a new organization but it should be 're-born' every single day through the practical intervention and involvement of all its members.

The 2nd Mediterranean Regional Dialogue

Participants welcomed the results of the first session and went on with some interventions and comments that are briefly resumed herewith.

Regarding the **Priorities for the Action Plan of COMPSUD** following additions, clarifications were formulated:

- s The desertification issue to be adopted as one of the priorities for the action of COMPSUD at regional and national levels.
- s Promotion of effective Governance for Environment and Sustainable Development.
- s Need in defining in a more clear and concrete way the 'water rights', specifying the type of rights (for the individual, the community, etc.) related to water that the Circle would like to deal with.
- s Extending the particular emphasis given to women in respect to water management to other categories of users that are also directly involved in the exploitation of water resources, such as farmers'communities and industries.
- s Keeping in mind that urban people, more than rural populations, are in need to be sensitized about the importance of saving water, especially in the countries characterized by water scarcity. The necessity for adapting actions and initiatives to the particular context and local conditions in which they are promoted was stated.
- s Giving stress to the promotion of awareness and sensitization of donors and sponsors that finance water management programs.

As far as the **Means and Methods** for the realization of the aforementioned priorities are concerned, the following comments were made:

sThe need to improve awareness and sensitization of Parliamentarians through the distribution of materials and information relating to the issues approached by the Circle, like the principles of IWRM and many of the terminologies (acronyms, definitions etc.) used during the meeting.

sTo this respect, it was also suggested to circulate to the Members of the Circle specific documents such as the Plan of Implementation of Johannesburg, pertinent information relating to Euro-Mediterranean issues, such as the Valencia statement, as well as other important documents resulting from International or Regional meetings and conventions. The use of the IWRM in the Mediterranean booklet published by GWP-Med and MIO-ECSDE was also suggested. This could be done once the proposed communication system for the COMPSUD is set up.

sThe communication system should also facilitate the exchange of information among Parliamentarians on what is happening in each Mediterranean country relating to the promotion of Sustainable Development. This would be important, for example, in view of the follow-up of Johannesburg, consisting in the drawing-up of a strategy for Sustainable Development by the year 2005 and in setting up a Commission for Sustainable Development.

sThe closer cooperation of the Circle of Parliamentarians with media and journalists of the region as well as with NGOs and educators was also considered important.

sIt was suggested that National NGOs in the different countries could undertake the facilitation of the Circle at their country level, keeping contacts with the MPs and providing them with the necessary support needed for the realization of the identified priorities.

sAlso, it was proposed, to form lobbies inside each Parliament, composed by MPs from different political parties and open to cooperation with NGOs that could inform other MPs and support the voting of laws and legislation for environment and sustainable development.

Prof. M. Scoullou, stated that all these comments should be listed and submitted together with the results of the session for further consideration to the Circle of Parliamentarians and to all those present at the session. He wished that the dialogue among the different Mediterranean stakeholders would continue in the future and would bring its fruits.

Closing of the meeting

The meeting was closed by the Chairman of COMPSUD, HE. J.C. Ruiz López. He stated that the Circle is open to any initiative proposed in the framework of the session and that it is up to all those present to make work of the organization alive every day with their commitment to promote Sustainable Development in the region.