



## NEWS RELEASE

Athens, 16 November 2016

### **The SWIM and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism Project: A Mediterranean contribution to the Climate Change Conference COP22**

More than 60 people attended the Official COP22 Side Event “Enhancing the resilience of the Mediterranean region to climate variability and change through SWIM-H2020 SM” that was held during the [Marrakech Climate Change Conference/22th Session of Conference of the Parties \(COP 22\)](#) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2016. A clear signal that resonated was how in a difficult time for the Mediterranean, SWIM-H2020 SM provides an open and inclusive platform for concrete action and enhanced synergies to address climate change throughout the region.

In his welcome remark, **Mr. Raul De Luzenberger-Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation to Morocco** underlined how the 100 activities of the EU-funded SWIM-H2020 SM Project are “demand driven, requested by the partner countries and will enhance the capacity of government departments, local authorities and various other stakeholders from North Africa and the Middle East in dealing with technical, methodological, governance and information/communication aspects in enhancing the resilience of the Mediterranean to climate change”.

**Dr. Djamel Djaballah, Director of the Department of Environment, Water, Housing and Sustainable Development of the League of Arab States**, stressed the importance the Arab countries attach to the project, which in fact they consider a model for replication in part because it focuses on adaptation without neglecting activities contributing to mitigation. “The balance between the two is critical for the Arab World” he said.

SWIM-H2020 SM’s role in supporting the countries’ efforts to properly manage their water resources, as well as the region’s renewed efforts for a Mediterranean Strategy for Water was mentioned by **Mr. Omar Benjelloun, Ministère Délégué chargé de l’Eau**, reinforcing the audio message of **Mr. Miguel García-Herraiz, Deputy Secretary General on Water & Environment of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean** that is guiding the process. The combined efforts lead to a Ministerial Meeting on this issue which is scheduled for April 2017, in Malta.

The facilitator of the Side Event, **Professor Michael Scoullas-Team Leader of the SWIM-H2020 SM Project and Dr. Emad Adly, Stakeholder Engagement expert SWIM-H2020 SM** presented the specific ways in which SWIM-H2020 SM’s activities scheduled for the coming 2.5 years will contribute by enhancing the capacity of countries and the Mediterranean region as a whole, to adapt to climate change. e.g. by reducing its dependence on water availability through promotion of non-conventional water resources, by mainstreaming policies, by informing, educating and involving citizens in decision making and campaigns to reduce energy and water demand, by promoting sustainable modes of production, recycling of waste and management practices that significantly reduce the pressures on natural resources and by employing preventive drought management schemes.

The Jordanian partner of a **SWIM Phase I Demonstration Project, ACLIMAS, Dr. Yahya Shakhathreh-National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension** offered examples of new and ‘revisited’ traditional agricultural techniques among those appropriate for adaptation measures.

The discussion that followed the short presentations was lively with strong suggestions for even more involvement of non-state actors, enhancement of visibility, a strengthened awareness raising component and further links with research and specifically the research Horizon 2020.

Overall, the Side Event succeeded to demonstrate the “facilitating” potential of the SWIM-H2020 SM in providing tools and creating or enhancing synergies with relevant regional programmes and organisations augmenting in this way the critical mass of related activities and multiplying the positive impact in increasing resilience.

**SWIM-H2020 SM offers its communication tools including 23 annual meetings in all 8 Partner Countries.**

For more information please contact:

Ms. Lisa PAPA DOGEOGAKI, Communication Officer SWIM-H2020 SM Email: [lpa@ldk.gr](mailto:lpa@ldk.gr), Website: [www.swim-h2020.eu](http://www.swim-h2020.eu)

**SWIM-H2020 SM Project Profile:** <http://www.swim-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SWIM-H2020-SM-Leaflet-en.pdf>

<http://www.swim-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SWIM-H2020-SM-Leaflet-ar.pdf>



## Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism

Working for a Sustainable Mediterranean, Caring for our Future.

This Project is funded by the European Union

### The Context

According to all climate models and predictions, the Mediterranean is a major climate change “hotspot” and serious negative impacts are expected: from sea level rise, reduced rainfalls and reduction of water availability to more frequent and serious droughts, faster loss of biodiversity (accompanied also by greater intrusion of alien species into the Mediterranean Sea) and many more phenomena and consequences that constitute an extremely complex cluster of interlinked problems. Many of them, such as the uncontrolled development, the rapid population growth in the Southern and Eastern coasts, the increasing tourism, the erosion of biodiversity and the overall environmental pollution were known in the region for many years. Furthermore, the recent economic, social and political crises, among which also the high refugee flows, are major new challenges, which make the proper solution of these problems, even more difficult.

Despite major inherent difficulties, at many levels, resulting from a variety of root causes (e.g. inflexible and/or outdated governance approaches, lack of transparency, fragmentation, lack of appropriate institutions and tools), the Mediterranean Countries and the EU, in close cooperation with International bodies, of the region, such as the UfM and UNEP-MAP/Barcelona Convention, as well as bilateral cooperation initiatives and a series of important programmes carried out by NGOs, have tried, and to a considerable degree succeeded, to address many of the challenges mentioned above. Renewed efforts towards this direction are made within the SWIM-H2020 SM Project (Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism 2016-2019) which builds on two successful projects (Horizon 2020 Mediterranean Environment Programme and SWIM I). This EU-funded project aims to contribute to the sustainable use of scarce water resources and properly manage municipal waste, industrial emissions and waste water, and therefore enhance, directly and indirectly, resilience to climate variability and change in the entire region with emphasis on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, (Libya), Morocco, Palestine, [Syria] and Tunisia).

### Photos & Captions:

#### 01 Photo From left to right

Dr. Emad Adly, Stakeholder Involvement Expert, SWIM-H2020 SM;

Dr. Djamel Djaballah, Director of the Department of Environment, Water, Housing and Sustainable Development of the League of Arab States;

Prof. Michael Scoullos, Team Leader, SWIM-H2020 SM; Mr. Raul De Luzenberger-Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation to Morocco;

Mr. Omar Benjelloun, Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Eau, Morocco.



#### 02 Photo From left to right

Mr. Omar Benjelloun, Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Eau, Morocco listening as

Mr. Jacques Legros, Chargé de Programmes Infrastructures, Délégation de l'Union européenne au Maroc replies to a question from the floor.

