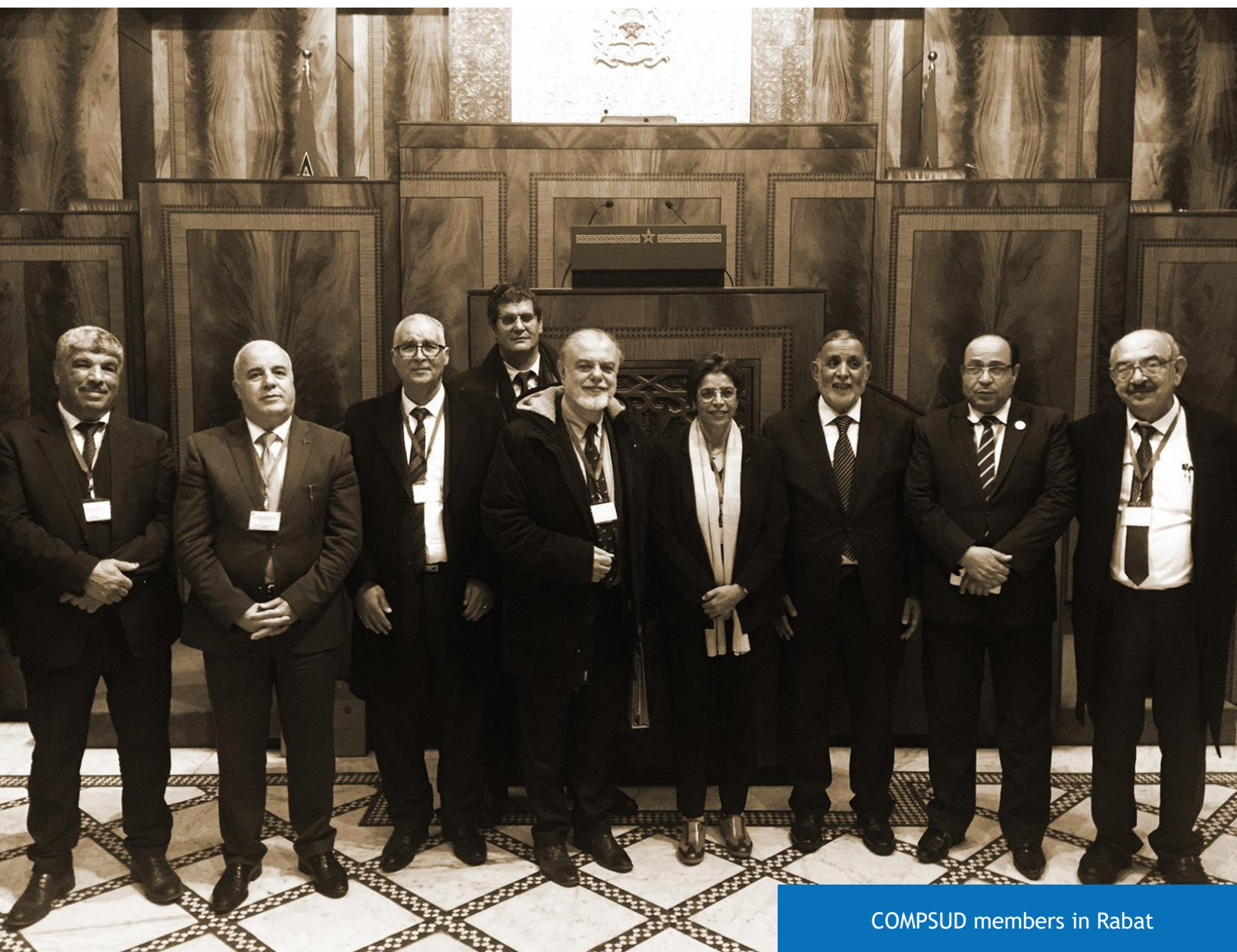




REPORT OF THE 14TH COMPSUD MEETING

Launching a new decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean

16-18 December 2019, Morocco



COMPSUD members in Rabat

COMPSUD is jointly facilitated by:

the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)

and the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)



Global Water
Partnership
Mediterranean



**Circle of Mediterranean
Parliamentarians for
Sustainable Development**

Joint Secretariat

Mediterranean Information
Office for Environment, Culture
and Sustainable Development
(MIO-ECSDE) & Global Water
Partnership- Mediterranean
(GWP-Med)

Contact details

12 Kyrristou str., 10556
Athens, GREECE

info@mio-ecsde.org

+30 210 3247490

COMPSUD (the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development) is an open, flexible and light structure, aiming to promote suitable mechanisms to support the dialogue among Members of Parliaments - from EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries- politicians and other Stakeholders on the protection of the Mediterranean environment and the necessary socio-economic conditions for the sustainable development of the region.

COMPSUD was created with the encouragement of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) and the Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean (GWP-Med) in December 2002 in the wake of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and emphasized the important role of partnerships and dialogue among the various stakeholders and decision makers, including Parliamentarians and politicians at large.

At the end of 2019, out of the membership of COMPSUD (92) around 40 Members are active and responsive.

MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med continue to jointly facilitate the secretariat of COMPSUD.



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Rabat, Dec 2019

Group photo outside
the Moroccan Parliament

Overview of the Rabat events

All the Members of COMPSUD were invited by the Chairman, Prof. Moh Rejdali, and the Secretary General, Prof. Michael Scoullas, in October 2019 to participate in the 14th COMPSUD Meeting or Annual Regional Dialogue of Parliamentarians, Journalists, NGOs and other Stakeholders, entitled “Launching a new decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean” taking place in the Chairman’s home base, the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, in Rabat, on the 17th of December, 2019. More than 120 people from most Mediterranean countries participated in the meeting. The main outcome of the meeting was the **Rabat Declaration** (read full text in Annex 2).

A closed administrative session of the Circle’s member Parliamentarians was arranged for the evening of the same day, while the day before, a training for Mediterranean Journalists and NGOs on “Raising

awareness on Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands and Nexus Nature-based Solutions in times of climate change” took place at the Farah Hotel. On the 18th, COMPSUD members enjoyed a site visit to Sidi Boughaba wetland - a Ramsar site north of Rabat. (see more information in Annex 1)

The meetings were organized by COMPSUD with the support of MIO-ECSDE (through the EU-funded Life+ Operating Grant for 2019) and GWP-Med. They were also supported by MedWet with the financial support of the MAVA foundation for nature, the International Water Management Institute and the ‘Making Water Cooperation Happen in the Mediterranean’ project (aka the Water Matchmaker) supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The 14th COMPSUD Meeting or 14th annual Regional Dialogue “Launching a new decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean”

The 14th annual Regional Dialogue (or 14th COMPSUD Meeting) took place at a moment where significant difficulties and challenges concerning the environment and sustainable development throughout the world, in general, and in the Mediterranean in particular, have become visible to the entire society and a new stimulus is needed for an inspiring vision to address them in the new decade towards 2030 and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the region.

More than 180 Mediterranean stakeholders, from high-level Moroccan officials, representatives of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), UNEP/MAP, the League of Arab States (LAS), Parliamentarians, Members of COMPSUD, COMJESD (Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development), to Media, Scientists and other representatives of Civil Society from Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Slovenia, Tunisia and Turkey, met at the premises of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, on the 17th of December 2019.



Rabat, Dec 2019

From left to right: The chairman of COMPSUD Prof. Rejdali, the speaker of the Parliament Prof. Malki and the Executive secretary of COMPSUD Prof. Scoullis, in the opening session of the 14th annual Regional Dialogue of COMPSUD.

The meeting was inaugurated by the Speaker of the Moroccan Parliament, Prof. Habib El Malki who expressed the significance of this Regional Dialogue in a time when the Mediterranean Region is facing critical geopolitical and environmental challenges and where the role of Parliamentarians of the entire political spectrum, as regulators and “controllers”, is extremely important. Prof. Malki reiterated the particular importance of the thematic of this meeting to the kingdom of Morocco that has the Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of its public policies and he stressed on the role of COMPSUD in the development of trans-border policies and the North-South and South-South exchange of expertise and technologies.

The chairperson of COMPSUD, Prof. Moh Rejdali, said that the Mediterranean scene necessitates the adoption of a good governance based on timely, accurate, objective and scientifically sound information. All the Mediterranean stakeholders are urged, mentioned Prof. Rejdali, to intensify their engagement and collaboration to reach a Sustainable Development in a basin that is considered one of the world’s hotspots where exceptional concentration of biodiversity is found, and which is facing serious environmental threats.

On a more positive note, the Executive Secretary of COMPSUD Prof. Scoullos focused on the significant progress that has been made on a number of key areas at regional and/or national level, including: the reduction of untreated urban and industrial waste discharges into the Mediterranean sea; integration of pollution prevention in regional and national agendas and shifting towards green and circular economy through the adoption and application of sustainable consumption and production practices; designation of new protected areas; to name a few. Despite these positive developments, added Prof. Scoullos, Mediterranean countries are facing today common challenges that require a high level of multilateral responses, collective actions, and mobilization of significant resources.



Rabat 2019

COMPSUD Member Ms. Fatiha Saddas chairing the 1st session of COMPSUD. Panelists from left to right: Dr. Djamel Djaballah (LAS-League of Arab States), Mr. Isidro González Afonso (Deputy Secretary General, Water, Environment & Blue Economy, UfM Secretariat), Mr. Jean-François Moret (EU Delegation in Morocco), Prof. Michael Scoullos, Ms. Fatiha Saddas, Mr. Mohamed Benyahia (Secretary General-Ministry for Energy, Mines and Environment, Morocco), Mr. Elgour (Director of the Cabinet of the Minister - Ministry of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water)

The first session of the Dialogue, chaired by Moroccan MP Ms Fatiha Saddas, was launched by Mr. Mohamed Benyahia, Secretary General of the Ministry for Energy, Mines and Environment and Mr. Elgour, Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water, who made references to the priorities of Morocco vis a vis its 'Mediterranean' Agenda for environment, water, energy, etc.

Mr. Isidro González Afonso, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM Secretary, Water, Environment and Blue Economy Division, referred to the results of the MedECC report describing them as "alarming". He also cited the recent initiatives of the UfM like the endorsement of the Mediterranean Water Agenda which links water, employment and migration under one of its four thematic and elaborated a financial strategy to improve the access to safe water in the region. The year 2020 will be crucial at the international and regional levels, he added, notably with two relevant UfM ministerial meetings: one on Blue economy and another on Environment and Climate change having at their cores the Green Deal of the new European Commission.

The UNEP/MAP Deputy Coordinator, Ms Tatjana Hema presented the outcomes of the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention that took place a few days before and stressed how the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025) is a strategic regional guiding document, aligned with the international commitments and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

"The Green Deal is the European response to the current challenges. This new development strategy aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy with zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in which economic growth will be decoupled from resource use", stated Mr. Jean-François Moret. He also clarified that the Green Deal will also apply to the Neighbourhood with considerable resources foreseen.



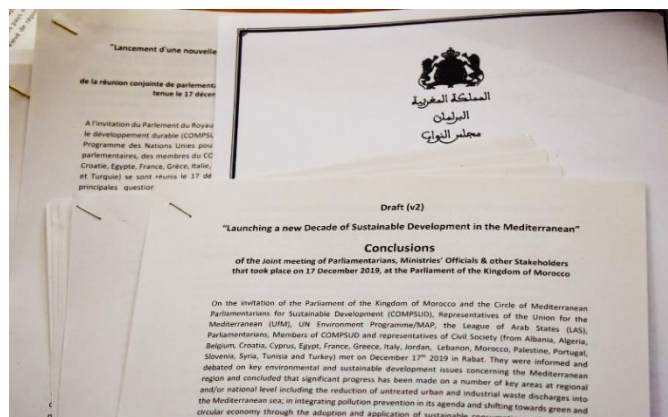
Rabat, Dec 2019

**HE Mr. Jerome Bignon,
senator of the Somme and
president of RAMSAR France**

HE Mr. Jerome Bignon, senator of the Somme and president of RAMSAR France, chaired the second session which, after an opening presentation on the preliminary findings of the MedECC report by Prof. Maria Snoussi, allowed for Parliamentarians and Stakeholders such as the EEB and RAED to take the floor. Several parliamentarians presented their countries' barriers toward achieving Sustainable Development as well as their recent achievements. HE Mr. Bignon mentioned the many benefits of wetlands, the initiatives of France to safeguard them, and how effective coastal management can be used to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

During the third session, chaired by COMPSUD Member HE Mr. Mohammed Abu Settah, Member of the Jordanian Parliament, experts from MedECC, MedWet, WWF North Africa, IWMI and GWP-Med presented the many ways in which coastal wetlands, as a nature-based solution, can mitigate the impacts of climate change on Mediterranean coastal zones. The benefits of integrated land/sea interface management, including through the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) approach as well as of Drought Maps as decision-making tools were presented along with successful actions carried out in wetlands to secure their protection and wise use.

The main conclusions of the meeting were presented in the last session by Prof. Michael Scoullas in the closing session chaired by HE Mr. Mohamed Khalifa, COMPSUD Member and Member of the Egyptian Parliament. The formal declaration of the meeting was unanimously approved by the plenary after reading through it on-screen and adapting it to include the views and suggestions of the participants. Therefore, equipped with timely, accurate, objective and scientifically sound information, the parliamentarians and the other stakeholders agreed on the Rabat Declaration ([ENG](#), [FR](#)).



Get all the details

FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING'S PRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS, PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK:
<http://mio-ecsde.org/mediterranean-parliamentarians-officials-journalists-scientists-and-ngos-on-track-for-making-the-new-decade-a-sustainable-one/>

FOR THE MEETING'S PHOTOS, PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK: <https://tinyurl.com/uenw3nh>

The COMPSUD administrative session

1. Introduction

The closed session of COMPSUD was graciously hosted on Tuesday the 17th in a meeting room in the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco from 19.00 to 20.30. The agenda included: (i) a Report of Activities and where the Circle stands now; (ii) a discussion on fundraising efforts; (iii) elections; and (iv) any other business. It was attended by the nine Members of the Circle that succeeded, despite their many obligations, to join the Rabat events:

- Prof. Moh REJDALI, Morocco
- Ms. Fatiha SADDAS, Morocco
- Mr. Mohammed KHALIFA, Egypt
- Mr. El Sayed HEGAZY, Egypt
- Mr. Mohammed ABU SETTEH, Jordan
- Mr. Ibrahim BANI HANI, Jordan
- Mr. Walid ASSAF, Palestine
- Mr. Mohamed Karim KRIFA, Tunisia
- Mr. Thameur SAAD, Tunisia

The Secretary General Prof. Michael Scoulllos also participated in the session, as did Anastasia Roniotes from MIO-ECSDE (the latter kept the minutes of the meeting). The Chairman Prof. Rejdali facilitated the meeting.

2. Report of Activities 2017-2019

The reporting period covered the period since the last closed meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development in Nicosia, Cyprus, November 2017, 10.00-12.00 at the Hilton Park Hotel.

2.1. Meetings

The 2017 dialogue of COMPSUD, NGOs, journalists and other stakeholders on current environmental problems was organized with the financial support of the LIFE+ operating grant of MIO-ECSDE and SWIM-H2020 SM project. Apart from the administrative meeting of COMPSUD, three back-to-back events were combined:

- Regional Training of the EU-funded SWIM-Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism on “Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement in the Mediterranean Environment & Water Agendas” (20-22 November 2017). The results were submitted to the Union for the Mediterranean and elements were taken up in the design of the post 2020 phase planning.
- Regional Training of the EU-funded SWIM-Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism on “Education for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean” (22-24 November 2017). (Also see: <https://www.swim-h2020.eu/22-24-november-2017-nicosia-cyprus-swim-h2020-sm-regional-training-on-education-for-sustainable-development-esd/>)
- Special session on the role of MPs in the implementation of the MSES, hosted at the Parliament of Cyprus, 22 November 2017



COMPSUD 12

Exiting COMPSUD Chair Dr. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou congratulates the new Chair MP Mr. Moh Rejdali and Vice Chair MP Mr. Mohamed Khalifa. Prof. Michael Scoulllos, stands on the right. (Cyprus, Nov 2017)



COMPSUD 13

Group photo outside
the European
Parliament
(Brussels, November
2018)

The 2018 dialogue of COMPSUD, NGOs, journalists and other stakeholders on current environmental problems was organized with the financial support of the LIFE+ operating grant of MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med in Brussels:

- 'A plastic-free Mediterranean Sea in the making': Mediterranean Members of Parliament and key stakeholders discuss the state of play and realistic steps forward: This meeting took place at the European Parliament, Brussels, on the 21st of November from 16:30-19:00. It was hosted by the Searica intergroup of the European Parliament in cooperation with COMPSUD. This was a unique occasion where Members of the European Parliament and Members of Parliament of non-EU countries came together with marine litter experts, environmental NGOs, journalists and other key stakeholders to explore the next steps in achieving a litter-free Mediterranean Sea.
- Regional Roundtable on Debating the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in MENA and the wider Mediterranean: How to make it deliver for sustainable development at national & transboundary level: Members of Parliament (MPs), Journalists and NGOs from 20 countries gathered in Brussels on the 22nd of November 2018 to debate the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in the Mediterranean. The aim of the event was to enhance the understanding of the Nexus framework and identify the needed actions to operationalize it in the Mediterranean, focusing in particular on the role of MPs and Media.

2.2. COMPSUD Participation in projects

The Chair of COMPSUD is a member of the Advisory Board of the EU funded Distributed Network for Odour Sensing, Empowerment and Sustainability (D-NOSES) project. It is a Horizon 2020 specific programme with and for society (SWaFS). It tackles odour pollution with the aim to introduce it in the policy agenda. It works towards the implementation of RIO principle 10 and the Aarhus convention, calling for civil society engagement and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs.

COMPSUD 14

From left to right: Mr. Isidro González Afonso, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM Secretary, Prof. Michael Scoullas, Executive Secretary of COMPSUD, Prof. Habib El Malki, Speaker of the Moroccan Parliament and COMPSUD Chair Prof. Moh Rejdali during a break at the Moroccan Parliament (December 17th, Rabat, 2019)



2.3. COMPSUD participation in international and regional processes

COMPSUD Member MP and former COMPSUD Chair, Dr. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou (Greece) was [Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Global Water Partnership Organisation \(Sweden\)](#) till the end of 2019 and is member of the GWPO Nominations Committee.

COMPSUD became a member of the [Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development \(MCSD\)](#) in 2018 and has been Vice-President of the MCSD Steering Committee since then. The Chair has been participating in the Steering Committee meetings and the biennial MCSD meetings. The Secretary General also follows the process very closely.

As Vice-President of the MCSD, COMPSUD drafted in 2018 two concept notes (terms of reference), in cooperation with MIO-ECSDE, for two Flagship Initiatives: one on [Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters](#) and one on how to [Undertake regional assessments, as well as](#)

[knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction.](#) Efforts to promote them and secure resources for their implementation have been fruitful. Under the Water and Environment Support in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region (WES), two regional activities have been included in the Work Programme to address both of these Flagship Initiatives. They will take place in the period 2020-2023.

The Chairman of COMPSUD participated in the [21st meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention \(Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019\)](#). He had been invited to make a 3-minute Statement during the Ministerial session on the 4th of December but due to Contracting Party statements taking longer than anticipated, no statements were made by those with observer status.

The Members congratulated the achievements of the Circle since November 2017.



**COMPSUD Members at the
Moroccan Parliament
(Rabat, Dec 2019)**

3. Discussing fundraising for the Circle

A tour-de-table followed with the Members presenting their ideas on how COMPSUD can be further supported. Regarding the fundraising efforts, Prof. Scoullos stressed on the importance of the Circle remaining independent and maintaining integrity. Funding from one country or from companies should be avoided. He ensured the members that funds are available through MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med for the Circle's operation over the next two years.

Concerning the sources of funding, projects or core funding, ideally from the EU, UN and LAS will be sought. The possibility of a visit of COMPSUD Board Members to Brussels to discuss the possibilities with the European Commission will be explored.

Prof. Scoullos reminded the MPs that they can contribute to the fundraising efforts of the federation by hosting the future meetings in their Parliaments. The current meeting at the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, where the Parliament very generously offered the venue, lunch and coffee breaks for all participants and dedicated staff members to support the preparation and hosting on the day, is an excellent example of very helpful fundraising. MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med provided the technical support (invitations, agenda, documents, etc.) and logistical arrangements (travel, accommodation and subsistence).

4. Elections for the 2020-2021 COMPSUD Board

COMPSUD is governed by a Board of up to five members. It is composed of a Chairperson and Vice Chairs whose mandate lasts for two years. Efforts are made to keep a North-South and gender balance in its synthesis.

Two years had elapsed since the last COMPSUD board election in Nicosia, Cyprus (November 2017) where a three-member Board was elected: Prof. Moh Rejdali from Morocco (Chair), Mr. Mohamed Khalifa from Egypt (Vice-Chair) and Mr. Kostantinos Skrekas from Greece (Vice-Chair).

On the 21st of November 2019, the COMPSUD secretariat sent a call for candidatures nomination to all the Members of the Circle, in view of the elections for the new Board to take place on the 17th of December in Rabat. Two documents were sent: A nomination form where members could nominate themselves or another person for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chair, and a candidature form where the nominee is asked to provide additional information. Within the deadline (6 December 2019) the secretariat received five nominations: for Mr. Mohammed Abu Setteh (Jordan), Mr. Mohamed Khalifa (Egypt), Ms Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou (Greece), Mr. Miodrag Vukovic (Montenegro) and Mr. Moh Rejdali (Morocco). The Circle was informed by email on the 13th of December about the nominations.



Rabat, Dec 2019

**COMPSUD closed session in
the Moroccan Parliament**

In Rabat, during the administrative meeting, the Members moved for the following unanimous decision for the Circle's new five-member Board:

Prof. Moh Rejdali was re-elected as **Chairman** after a successful two-year term at the head of the Circle.

As Vice-Chairs:

Mr. Mohamed Khalifa (Egypt)

Mr. Mohammed Abu Setteh (Jordan)

Ms Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou (Greece), Chair of the Environment Committee of the Greek Parliament, former chairperson of COMPSUD

Mr. Miodrag Vukovic (Montenegro)

The Members congratulated the outgoing Vice-Chair Mr. Konstantinos Skrekas, who was recently re-elected as Member of Parliament and also appointed as Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Greece.

5. Any other Business

Under the item 'Any other business' of the agenda, the possibility of hosting the 15th COMPSUD meeting (2020) at the Greek Parliament and the 16th COMPSUD meeting (2021) at the Cypriot Parliament was discussed.

Under the Water and Environment Support in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region (WES) project, a Consultation meeting including MPs and Local Authorities will take place in June-July 2020 in view of the UfM Ministerial on Environment and CC (tentatively to take place in October 2020). It too offers a good optional opportunity for the 2020 annual dialogue of COMPSUD. More news will follow soon.

Mr. Ibrahim Bani Hani, Jordanian Member of Parliament and long-standing Member of COMPSUD, informed that this may have been his last COMPSUD meeting as he plans to step down from politics altogether. The Members expressed appreciation of his vivid contributions and efforts of making a real impact in matters of sustainable development in Jordan.

After the meeting concluded, the Members of COMPSUD were given a tour of the building of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, by the host and re-elected Chair of COMPSUD, Prof. Moh Rejdali.



Rabat, Dec 2019

**Mr. Ibrahim Bani Hani (left) and
Mr. Mohammed Abu Setteh (right),
Jordanian COMPSUD Members at
the Moroccan Parliament.**

ANNEX 1

Training for Mediterranean Journalists and NGOs “Raising awareness on Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands and Nexus Nature-based Solutions in times of climate change”

Apart from COMPSUD, MIO-ECSDE and GWP-MED facilitate the Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development (COMJESD). The Circle aims to strengthen information and communication experts in their capacity of sensitizing and informing Mediterranean societies, improving democratic and participatory processes and in directing more effectively the flow of information produced by scientists, NGOs, etc. to decision-makers, ultimately influencing policy formulation and policy implementation.

Given the key role that media and civil society have to play in raising public awareness on challenges, impacts and solutions on climate change, 20 Mediterranean journalists, members of COMJESD and 45 NGO representatives participated in a series of events with emphasis on Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands in Rabat, Morocco, on 16-18 December 2019.

The workshop equipped journalists and civil society representatives with a fine-tuned understanding of the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean and wetlands’ contributions as nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change impacts and reinforce coastal communities’ resilience, while protecting biodiversity. Relevant tools to address these impacts such as the water-energy-food ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus approach and the draught maps as well as some impactful data visualization tools available to journalists, were presented.

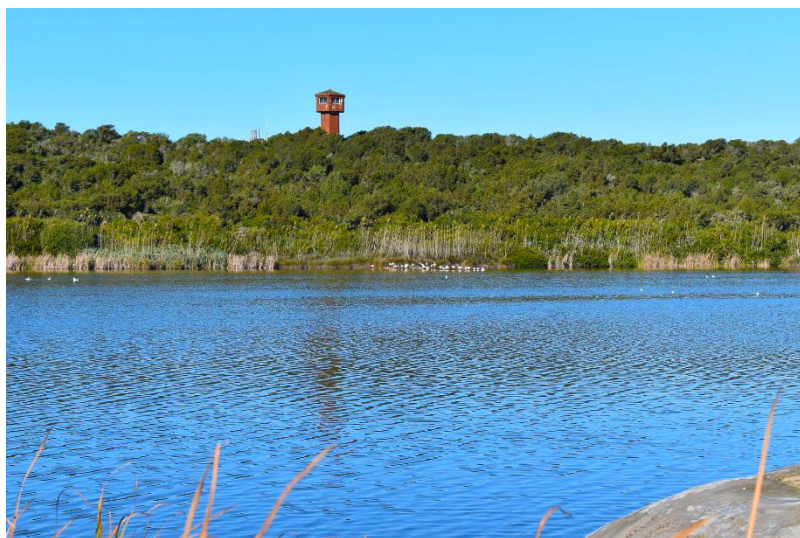
Get all the details

FOR MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT
THE TRAINING, PLEASE
FOLLOW THIS LINK:

<https://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-Mediterranean/WE-ACT/News-List-Page/empowering-mediterranean-journalists-ngos-on-mediterranean-coastal-wetlands/>

FOR THE TRAINING’S
PHOTOS, PLEASE
FOLLOW THIS LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/tuz6tr3>



Field visit to the wetland Sidi Boughaba, a Ramsar Site

The Rabat events ended with a field visit to Sidi Boughaba that was included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance in 1980. It is located on the northwestern coast of Morocco 25 km north of Rabat, it covers 635 ha and includes a 113 ha freshwater lake.

The Forestry department has entrusted the management of the

site to SPANA Morocco (a member of MIO-ECSDE). SPANA presented the management plan that aims to preserve the wetland and that is implemented in close collaboration with the local community, other NGOs and the support of the Moroccan authority in charge of wetlands.

The participants also visited the National Centre for Environmental Education (NCEE) located within the Sidi Boughaba Ramsar site. The center is used as an educational tool to raise awareness among students and teachers about the importance of protecting nature and animals in general and wetlands in particular.

FOR THE SITE VISIT'S
PHOTOS, PLEASE FOLLOW
THIS LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/t4bflff>

ANNEX 2

The Rabat Declaration

“Launching a new Decade of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean”

On the invitation of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), Representatives of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), UN Environment Programme/MAP, the League of Arab States (LAS), Parliamentarians, Members of COMPSUD, COMJESD (Circle of Mediterranean Journalists for Environment and Sustainable Development), other Media, and other representatives of Civil Society (from Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Slovenia, Tunisia and Turkey) met on December 17th 2019 in Rabat. They were informed and debated on key environmental and sustainable development issues concerning the Mediterranean region and concluded that significant progress has been made on a number of key areas at regional level (Union for the Mediterranean, Barcelona Convention, Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, League of Arab States) and/or national level, including the reduction of untreated urban and industrial waste discharges into the Mediterranean sea; in integrating pollution prevention in its agenda and shifting towards green and circular economy through the adoption and application of sustainable consumption and production practices; in designation of new protected areas;

in introducing formal, non-formal and informal Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with the involvement of many stakeholders; in elaborating, in several countries, incentives and/or legislation for the reduction of the use of plastics that constitute a major part of marine litter; as well as in shifting to greater use of renewable energies and non-conventional water resources. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the European Green Deal, among others, offer opportunities for transformative policies and actions.

Despite these very welcome positive developments, unfavorable conditions at regional and global level, including major old and new conflicts, economic recession, political instability and rapidly growing population in some Mediterranean countries of the east and south coasts, have increased the pressures on both natural resources and societies of the Mediterranean. The latter are paralleled by considerable increase of the flows of refugees as well as economic and environmental migrants to Mediterranean countries. The overall critical situation is further exacerbated by the change in the climate of the region, that is warming 20% faster than the world's average, resulting perhaps in the most severe ecological and climatic crisis of its long history with more frequent and severe droughts, floods, reduced snowfall and ice cover on mountains, forest fires, various types of erosion, intrusion of seawater, rapid biodiversity loss, invasion of alien species, as well as unfavorable impacts on historic monuments and pieces of art and other major challenges, including weakened human security, increased conflicts, health problems and socioeconomic collapse, all phenomena that the 25th Meeting of the Signatory Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25, Madrid, 2-13 December 2019) failed to take seriously into account. As pointed out by the recently approved key messages of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report (2019 SoED), it is clear that Mediterranean countries are facing today common challenges that require a high level of multilateral responses, collective actions, and mobilization of significant resources.

Against these developments and in view of the new decade 2020-2030, which will be critical (perhaps the last decade within which preventive mitigation and adaptation measures may make sense and have positive impact) for the future of the environment and sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region and the entire world, Governments, National Parliaments, Media, Scientists, Civil Society Organisations and Society as a whole, including the private/corporate sector, need to urgently and effectively come together in order to address the environmental and climate crisis.

The present gathering focused on the need to work systematically together in order to:

- Further strengthen efficient/good governance and promote a green, circular and, to the extent possible, carbon neutral economy, based on sound scientific evidence-based decision making, by prioritizing integrated environmental planning and management (land-sea-air), participatory processes, including accession to the Aarhus Convention and by introducing and improving relevant legal/institutional frameworks and market incentives.
- Harmonize National Legislations and Frameworks with relevant Global and Regional Conventions, Protocols, Agendas and Strategies and put in place the necessary provisions for their ratification and proper implementation, monitoring and reporting. Among them, of particular significance are the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UfM Water, Environment, Climate and Blue Economy Agendas, the Barcelona Convention and the recent Decisions of the 21st Meeting of its Contracting Parties (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019), the Ramsar Convention, etc.
- Address biodiversity loss and land degradation together with climate change in a combined and integrated way as a political priority, given the fundamental value of biological diversity, in particular of the marine and coastal ecosystems in providing goods and services essential for sustaining the livelihoods of people across the Mediterranean region.
- Commit to an active and coordinated participation at the 26th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC that will take place in Glasgow (November 2020) following a preparatory phase coordinated jointly by COMPSUD and major regional bodies and networks.
- Recognize and upgrade at the level of National and Regional security, the security of the “WaterEnergy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus” (WEFE Nexus) with due promotion of renewable energies and due amendments in regulatory frameworks for the safe use of non-conventional water resources.
- Within the aforementioned approach, target the two major economic sectors of the region, namely Agriculture and Tourism and accordingly adapt in an integrative way appropriate priorities, strategies, and practices, accompanied by concrete measures.
- Favour with concrete incentives and measures reflected in improved national actions plans nature-based solutions, particularly for landscape restoration and management of coastal wetlands and other vulnerable ecosystems. These measures should be compatible with the Ecosystem Based Approach (EcAp/EBA) and the optimal combination of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) with Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Climate Change measures, the Integrative Methodological Framework (IMF-UNEP/UNESCO/GWP-Med) and the WEFE Nexus approach and constitute no-regret measures for addressing the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, contributing to the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) following an integrated and systemic approach.

- Promote the use of drought plans and maps and vulnerability/flood risk maps as efficient planning/management and decision-making tools.
- Recognizing the gravity of the marine litter problem and the attribution of plastics to it -including biodegradable ones, support a legally binding agreement at global level and the urgent introduction of specific legislation for phasing out single use plastics in parallel to return/reuse/recycling and extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes and efficient municipal, agriculture and tourism industry solid waste management systems.
- Concerned about the increasing flows of refugees and migrants to Mediterranean countries and the various significant pressures on the local communities, resources, infrastructures and services including those of water, energy, education and health, request the European Union and the International Community to demonstrate, in concrete ways, solidarity and elaborate comprehensive policies that reduce the pressures in the countries of origin, while supporting the host and transition countries in promoting and maintaining concrete schemes to alleviate the consequences for refugees and reception communities at national and local level.
- Promote systematically Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at all educational levels and types according to the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD (MSESD) and its Action Plan, and upscale the material and human resources invested in it, as education and awareness are the most efficient and cost-effective means in addressing the challenges of the new decade and beyond by shaping the behaviors towards more sustainable modes of consumption and production and respect to the unique natural and cultural environment and heritage of the Mediterranean.
- Welcome and acknowledge inter alia UN, EU and LAS policies, strategies and programs/projects supporting the efforts of the governments and civil society of the region in promoting the protection of the Environment and its Sustainable Development in conditions of peace, democracy, stability, solidarity, respect of each country's sovereignty and protection of human rights.

We emphasize the need for urgent action in the Mediterranean based on renewed strong political will and significant resource mobilization to make all of the above happen.

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Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development

Joint Secretariat

Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable
Development (MIO-ECSDE) & Global Water Partnership- Mediterranean (GWP-Med)

Contact details

12 Kyrristou str., 10556 Athens, GREECE

info@mio-ecsde.org +30 210 3247490