



**FOURTH MEETING OF THE HORIZON 2020 STEERING GROUP
AMMAN
22-23 FEBRUARY 2011
SUMMARY RECORD**

1. Opening remarks

Following welcoming remarks from Mr Ahmad Al Qatarneh, Assistant Secretary General at the Ministry of Environment in Jordan further opening remarks were given by Ms Irene Mingasson from EU Delegation to Jordan and Mr Nick Hanley from DG Environment at the European Commission. An introductory intervention was made by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) co-chair, Mr Antoine Tristan-Mocilnikar from the Mission for the UFM, France. Apologies were received from the Egyptian co-chair who was unable to attend due to recent events in the country.

2. Adoption of Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting

The Agenda of the Meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Copies of the presentations given during the meeting are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/2011_amman_en.htm

3. Context: State of play with the Union for the Mediterranean

The co-chair outlined the current state of play of the UfM and highlighted a number of meetings and activities that had taken place since the last meeting despite the difficult context. It is clear that the ongoing events in the region will lead to further evolution of this regional policy but the shape of this evolution is not yet clear.

The UfM Secretariat is now up and running with an agreed budget and programme of work. A number of good candidates had come forward to replace the outgoing Secretary General, a sign of an organisation that was becoming firmly established.

Attending his first Horizon 2020 meeting as Deputy Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat, Rafiq Husseini made an introductory intervention in which he outlined his desire to work with all of the partners in the region and reassured participants that the Secretariat was not seeking to duplicate ongoing work but to supplement it working on issues where the Secretariat could add value.

The state of play with the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean was given. Whilst the H2020 focal points are not necessarily those dealing with water issues the linkages were felt to be sufficiently strong for the issue to be of interest to the H2020 meeting. With the political blockage on the wording of the Strategy having persisted since the Ministerial meeting in April 2010 the technical and political aspects will be de-coupled to enable technical work to proceed. In practical terms this "de-coupling" will mean that diplomatic efforts to resolve the wording of the Strategy will continue through the regular UfM Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). However the technical development of the national Action Plans foreseen under the Strategy may now begin in parallel. The intention is to try to be in a position to adopt the complete package (Strategy and Action Plans) at a future ministerial meeting when the outstanding political issues have been resolved.

In the subsequent discussion the added value of the UfM was raised. It was suggested that one potential that is yet to be fully exploited is the possibility of reaching out beyond environment ministries to those other ministries who are essential to deliver environmental protection. Integration into other sectors could be helped by the cross-sectorial nature of the UfM and the possibility of obtaining endorsement for actions at the highest level of government. One useful role that could be played by the UfM Secretariat would be to keep an accessible overview of the projects that are ongoing or completed from all of the donor community as this is presently lacking.

4. Reports on the components of Horizon 2020

Mr. Jesús Laviña (EuropeAid, European Commission) introduced the item and gave an overview of the projects being supported by the Commission.

4.1 Pollution reduction project component

Mr Otto Hüsken from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the team implementing the Mediterranean Hot-Spot Investment Programme – Project Preparation and Implementation Facility (MeHSIP-PPIF) gave a comprehensive overview of the state of play of the situation with the various front-runner projects. They also drew attention to the newly created web-site on which much of the information can now be found (www.mehsip-ppif.eu). A presentation of MeHSIP-PPIF's activities in Lebanon was given by Mr Bassam Sabbagh from the Ministry of Environment. In addition an overview of the work being carried out to extend the MeHSIP-PPIF to the Western Balkans under the Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP) was given by Ms Christine Haffner.

Information was provided by Mr Ivica Trumbic on the UNEP/MAP GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem and the need for close cooperation with this important project was recognised.

In the exchanges that followed a number of participants sought clarity on what was meant by "funding secured" and how these secure projects were followed up once they were no longer being followed under the MeHSIP-PPIF project. There were questions raised on the issue of 'non-bankable' projects and how they could be dealt with. A couple of countries highlighted that they do not take EIB loans and therefore are not involved with the MeHSIP-PPIF being outside the scope of this work.

There was a feeling in the meeting that projects for which funding was secure still needed to be followed and that statistics on projects are required to give an overview and demonstrate progress. Some of this data is provided on the MeHSIP-PPIF web-site

(www.mehsip-ppif.eu) but some additional clarifications would be given on projects for which funding was secured. Input from all donors/IFIs would be needed to develop an overview. There was a suggestion that the UfM Secretariat would be the logical place to develop the overview and regular reporting on updates of ongoing projects with funding secured as well as the overall reporting on the Horizon 2020 Project List, but recognition that the current level of staffing and resources may not be able to yet provide it.

4.2. Monitoring component of H2020

Mr. David Stanners (EEA) described the state of play in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) for Horizon 2020. He explained the philosophy of SEIS and gave an overview of the activities that would be undertaken under the ENPI project including the country visits that will take place later in the year. It was emphasised that the Horizon 2020 focal points would need to be kept fully informed and play an active role in these visits that are to be the starting point for the SEIS development across the region.

This was followed by an outline from CEDARE of their work and collaboration with the EEA in assisting the monitoring component of Horizon 2020.

During discussions it was underlined that UNEP/MAP was a key partner in this work and is committed to playing an active role in the system.

In the discussion that followed a number of partner countries outlined the difficulties that they faced particularly in the absence of baseline data. The comment was also made that the research element of Horizon 2020 was in danger of being overlooked and that particular efforts were needed to focus on this issue particularly in the monitoring and research sub-group.

Participants were informed that the next meeting of the Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) Sub-Group would be held at the premises of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen. A comment was made that the last meeting had been held over two years ago (October 2008 in Athens) but it was explained that this was not an indication of lack of progress. The intervening period had seen intensive contacts and numerous meetings between the key organisations involved in monitoring activity and that the launch meeting for the SEIS project (Brussels, November 2010) had been a first occasion to bring together the country representatives to begin working on the issue.

4.3. Capacity building

Professor Michael Scoullos gave a detailed presentation in which he outlined the background to the Capacity Building Sub-Group and the Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP). The MEP is the capacity building project that is being financed by the European Commission in support of Horizon 2020. He gave a detailed description of the methodology, the principles of the project approach and the expected results. It was explained that the project covers not only the Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries but also the Mediterranean countries of South East Europe. He explained how following a period of intense country visits the MEP Work Programme was endorsed at the meeting of the Horizon 2020 Capacity Building Sub-Group that was held in Brussels in June 2010 and its implementation is currently well under way despite the recent political developments in the region.

The meeting was informed of the coordination mechanism that has been set up between the three sub-groups of Horizon 2020 (Pollution Reduction, RMR and Capacity Building) as well as an internet site (www.h2020.net) that is now operational covering three of the H2020 components (pollution reduction, capacity building and monitoring) and also covers the Commission projects financed under the ENPI in support of these components. A demonstration of the internet site was given.

Professor Scoullos outlined some of the training seminars and other activities that have already taken place under the project as well as the communication initiatives that are taking place. A summary of activities planned for the near future was also given.

An explanation of synergies and coordination with other actors was also provided in the presentation.

M. Bouzekri Razi followed with a presentation giving the viewpoint of Morocco on its participation in the capacity building activities. He outlined the country visits and preparatory work that had gone into the preparation of the activities in which his country had participated to date. He finished with a call to foresee national events to complement the sub-regional activities as a way of reaching a wider public.

In the discussion that followed, questions were asked as to how the synergies between the different groups were to be pursued. The co-chair made a general remark (applicable to other elements of the agenda) that for future meetings it would be useful to have written report with much of the detail that was currently included in the presentations being given in writing. It was also felt that capacity building activities should be adjusted to take into account new developments of countries' policies.

Under this item Mr Sherif Arif gave a presentation informing participants of the Sustainable Water Integrated Management Support System (SWIM) project.

4.4 Next phase

The final item was a wide ranging discussion on Horizon 2020, its progress, its future and a number of other issues of interest to participants.

When discussing investment projects the question was asked as to whom updates should be sent as the situation with investment needs changed. The answer was given that if it concerns investment projects that are yet to secure funding and part of Horizon 2020 Pipeline, then the MeHSIP-PPIF team would be happy to receive updates. It was suggested that other updates could be sent to the UfM Secretariat. Another point that also was stressed concerned the mechanism to be adopted for regular reporting on investment projects. The point made was that these investment projects have national ownership and it is, therefore, primarily the responsibility of the national project promoter to ensure regular updates are provided to the relevant host/manager of the investment pipeline.

There was a call from the co-chair to use all available means to circulate information. The need to be able to produce easily understandable figures of achievement for the projects was re-iterated. There was support for the UfM Secretariat to work on the issue as it becomes increasingly operational. There was also a discussion on what could be done to increase the awareness of activities for various target audiences (decision makers, general public, national administrations). Whilst all participants agreed on the need for awareness raising there was no clear consensus on how this should be achieved.

In the discussions around training some participants asked that the courses should have an evaluation form and that this should be shared after the event with the Focal Points.

A number of Horizon 2020 Focal Points felt that they were struggling to effectively participate in H2020 given the large number of activities and the wide range of responsibilities they carry and were looking for assistance. The European Commission clarified that whilst it could try to assist through projects it is not allowed to support staff costs in partner country ministries.

5. Concluding remarks

The Head of the EU delegation, Ms Joanna Wronecka closed the meeting. In her intervention she outlined the methods of cooperation and reassured participants that at a time when change is sweeping the Mediterranean, the commitment of the EU to cooperation with its partners remains constant.