



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

MINUTES

of the meeting held at the Dead Sea, Jordan
8 February 2014

1. Opening of the meeting, adoption of the draft agenda and approval of the minutes of the meeting in Stockholm on 27 May 2013

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed his new Vice-Chair Mr. Zuhair SANDUQA from the Palestine National Council.

After the adoption of the draft agenda and the approval of the draft minutes of the Committee meeting in Stockholm on 27 May 2013 the Chair gave a brief overview of the work of the Committee.

2. The Red Sea – Dead Sea Canal: Perspectives and Challenges

Mr. Hazem AL-NASER, Minister of Water and Irrigation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, informed the Committee in his initial remarks that the water level of the Dead Sea has fallen 32 metres in the last 50 years and that the region was facing an environmental disaster. When presenting the Red Sea – Dead Sea Project, the provision of a secure and affordable water supply for Jordan, while saving the Dead Sea from extinction, was identified as the main motivation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 9 Dec 2013 between Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Israel at the World Bank in Washington DC, in which all parties agreed to start the implementation of the first phase of the project. Following up on this MoU, bi-lateral agreements will soon be signed between Jordan and Israel and between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Mr. Munqeth MEHYAR, Chairperson and Jordanian Director of Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), said that research over the past 20 years has provided valuable data. This includes the finding that the decline of the Dead Sea has been caused by two major factors: only 6% of Jordan River's water now flows into the Dead Sea and the mining industry in Israel and Jordan consumed a large amount of Dead Sea water. For FoEME the rehabilitation of the Jordan River in addition to a combination of alternatives was the most feasible solution. He congratulated the governments of Jordan, Israel and Palestine on signing a MoU to establish a desalination plant in Aqaba and a pipeline with desalination brine to the Dead Sea in addition to reaching a water swapping agreement.

Delegates from the Palestinian Authority, Morocco and Jordan took the floor in the following discussion.

3. Mediterranean Solar Plan – Potential and Paradigm Shift

Ms. Teresa RIBEIRO, Deputy Secretary General for Energy at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), advocated a shift to a new energy model that involved both shores of the Mediterranean where the UfM could bring added influence. Challenges were huge in the Mediterranean and countries would have to find answers. A holistic approach should include regional dialogue and confidence building, knowledge transfer, capacity building, as well as awareness raising. In addition Member States were invited to present projects to the UfM Secretariat.

Ms. Joanna WRONECKA, Ambassador of the EU to Jordan, stressed that in view of global warming the EU saw the urgency of enhancing renewable energy sources. In that sense the Mediterranean Solar Plan was a vision for the Mediterranean reflecting the commitment of the region. She referred to the Ministerial Meeting of Mediterranean energy ministers in Brussels on 11 December 2013 that took stock of the work done on the Mediterranean Solar Plan which should exploit its huge potential.

Delegates from Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Finland, the European Parliament, Morocco and Algeria took the floor in the following discussion.

4. Financing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources

Ms. Flavia PALANZA, Director in charge of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) at the European Investment Bank (EIB), reported on the 13th FEMIP Conference on “Energy Efficiency in the Mediterranean Region” that took place on 10 December 2013 in Brussels. Energy efficiency and renewable energies needed to be looked at together, she said, when reducing energy consumption. The EIB could foster regional cooperation, reduce the gap between wealthier and poorer countries and provide long term financing for the private sector and infrastructure as well as provide advice through feasibility studies.

5. Eco-towns and “Let’s Do It” Campaign – State of Play

Ms. Rima TARABAY, the initiator and coordinator of Eco-towns Project, informed the Committee that the network had already enlisted eight coastal towns in seven countries (Lebanon, Greece, Slovenia, France, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt) since its creation on 11 December 2012. Mayors had committed themselves to promoting renewable energies, water treatment for irrigation, waste management, biological agriculture, mobility reduction, eco-tourism, sustainability, education in ecology and awareness raising.

The Chair announced that the “Let’s Do It Mediterranean!” campaign would be officially launched on 31 May 2014 highlighting the Committee’s efforts. In preparing the launch the Chair would hold a meeting with NGOs in Vienna on 11 February.

Delegates from the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Algeria took the floor in the following discussion.

6. Adoption of the draft recommendations

The draft recommendations together with 28 tabled amendments were adopted unanimously.

7. Any other business

The **next meeting** of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water will take place in **Barcelona** at the Secretariat of the UfM on 12 June 2014.
