



AD HOC COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

DRAFT MINUTES

of the meeting held in Linz, Austria
on 12 and 13 October 2009

12 October 2009

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Mr. **SCHENNACH**, opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members. He then relayed greeting from one of the co-chairs, Mr. **BOUHRIZI**, who was not able to attend the meeting due to elections. The Chair then welcomed the new Co-Chair, Ms. **PARVANOVA**, who is the new head of the delegation from the European Parliament to the Ad Hoc Committee. Finally, the Chair expressed his delight in welcoming the Minister of the Environment of Jordan, Mr. **IRANI**.

2. Adoption of the draft agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

3. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water, held in Vienna on 18 May 2009 were adopted.

4. Opening session

In his introductory remarks, the **Chair** touched upon the following topics:

- The 64th session of the *General Assembly of the United Nations* and the *Summit on Climate Change* convened by the Secretary-General of the UN last 22 September in New York as two major events that are relevant to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

- The Copenhagen Climate Conference in December as a major event with approximately 21,000 expected participants.
- The Ministerial Conference held in Paris, where 5 billion dollars were raised for projects within the Union for the Mediterranean.
- A meeting held in Algeria regarding the *DESERTEC* project, probably the biggest and most ambitious infrastructure project worldwide.
- 2010 being the *International Year of Biodiversity*, the enlarged *EMPA* Bureau has requested this Committee to reflect on a possible contribution.
- The Chair gave a brief presentation on the city of Linz, the capital of Upper Austria, explaining the importance of the river Danube, environmental aspects, employment figures, the role of the industry and the closely related topic of clean air.

The President of the Upper Austrian Province Parliament, Ms. **ORTHNER**, then gave her welcome speech. She started by expressing her delight in having this meeting held in the city of Linz and expressed her warmest welcome to the delegates. In her speech, she gave an overview of the economy, the agriculture, the cultural activities and the *Eco-Energy Cluster* of Upper Austria. This cluster is composed out of 150 companies, employs around 4,500 persons, has an average turnover of 1.8 billion Euros and exports over 50 per cent of its products to 40 countries. In Upper Austria, 72 per cent of the electricity currently used comes from renewable energy sources. Ms. **ORTHNER** closed her speech by emphasizing everyone's responsibility towards the following generations, the major principle guiding the drive towards environment friendly policies in her country.

5. Preparation of the Copenhagen Climate Conference with a special focus on the Mediterranean region

The first of two keynote speakers under this topic was Minister **IRANI** from Jordan who started by emphasizing the importance of a global climate regime. Whereas the Bali action plan asks industrialized countries to come up with specific emission reduction goals, developing countries were not asked to do the same but many have already imposed self-limitations. Nevertheless, a successful Copenhagen Climate Conference is needed and would be very much welcomed by Jordan. Minister **IRANI** also mentioned a meeting of Arab Ministers of Environment held the week before, where one of the most innovative and promising regional initiative, namely the *Mediterranean Solar Plan* and the *Adaptation Fund* were discussed.

He then presented the specific situation of Jordan, a country that contributes a mere 0.1 per cent to global CO₂ emissions but is very active in terms of renewable energy promotion and environmental protection due to, amongst others, a severe water scarcity. Jordan has recently developed its modified "*National Energy Strategy 2020*" that will be accompanied by a package of investments of an estimated 2,2 billion dollars. Minister **IRANI** mentioned a list of initiatives related to water management in Jordan and as a bold, long-term solution for water scarcity he explained Jordan's landmark project of building a water conveyor from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea.

Mr. Rudi **ANSCHÖBER**, the Regional Minister for the Environment of Upper Austria then started his speech by saying that the projections regarding the impact of climate change have not only proven true but exceed forecasts if we look e.g. at melting polar caps. As we are all sitting in the same boat, only a common effort of all countries will be able to make a difference. Therefore the 2 degrees Celsius target of the *United Nations Climate Change Conference* in Copenhagen is vital, a fair distribution of investments and efforts has to be

reached and a system of quantifiable goals and related mechanisms for sanctions should be established.

Regarding the Province of Upper Austria, the conversion to renewable energy sources has been made a constitutional principle. A series of measures are in place to achieve a conversion towards using 100 per cent alternative energy resources for ambient heating and electricity by the year 2030:

- Increase in the number of solar panels, photovoltaic plants and water hydropower plants;
- information of and consultation with the population together with stable and transparent subsidy programs;
- comprehensive thermal rehabilitation program for private households;
- heavy promotion of so called beacon projects;
- create the right legislative environment;
- invest in education (e.g. in Upper Austria there is an instituted teaching profession called *eco-engineering/eco-technician*);
- invest in research and development;
- organise a big trade exhibition (the so-called “*Energy Saving Trade Fair*” in Wels);
- the *Eco-Energy Cluster* for companies; and
- promote exports (the so called “export offensive”).

During the discussion, the following delegates asked questions or made comments:

The Chair mentioned the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia and the interest taken by the Universities of Naples (Italy) and Alexandria (Egypt) in participating in the project. He further mentioned a study by the *Club of Rome* that estimates the costs of switching to renewable energy in Europe to around 85 billion Euros (compared to 2,000 billion Euros that were invested to counter the economic crisis).

Mr. **STEENBLOCK** (Germany) and Ms. **PARVANOVA** (European Parliament) mentioned the strong resistance from the industry against environmental measures. Mr. **ANSCHÖBER** answered that the following arguments based on the experience of Upper Austria could be used:

- Investments revive the economic activity, which is especially useful in times of crisis;
- savings on costs related to environmental pollution and natural disasters can be achieved (the extensive flooding caused by the river Danube in 2002 caused damages amounting to 1.1 billion Euros in Upper Austria alone);
- less energy has to be imported;
- an increase in the working population increases the tax income; and
- investments can be diverted from other planned, non-ecological investments.

To this, Ms. **ORTHNER** added, that common sense alone is sometimes not sufficient to convince players. She mentioned that in the 70ies and 80ies the air was so extremely polluted in Linz that the main polluter *Voest* had to start investing in environmental technologies. Today it is clear that these investments have guaranteed the survival of the company. Therefore a mix between stimulation and demands has to be found by governments.

Mr. **BENTOUMI** (Algeria) asked whether it would make sense to establish dedicated funds at the national level, how an international agreement should function and how the partnership between the north and the south should function keeping in mind the well known differences.

Minister **IRANI** mentioned that a global breakthrough would be achieved if the environmental costs were to be added to the costs of fossil fuels and that the Arab region was only contributing around 5 per cent to global emissions anyway. Regarding the funds, there should also be money available at the national level in addition to the very important international financial resources.

Mr. **ANSCHOBBER** answered that an effective international agreement would have to be based upon the following:

- A clear goal and a clear mechanism, supported by all players;
- some form of taxation (certificates, CO₂ tax...);
- an adaptation fund for countries with low financial resources;
- a fund promoting new technologies in low income regions; and
- in the long-term, a common per capita emission limit.

Ms. **ORTHNER** made a point in expressing her opinion that nuclear energy is definitely not the solution for the quest in converting to environment friendly energy and she was supported by Mr. **STEENBLOCK** (Germany) who also suggested that a discussion about nuclear energy should be held within the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water. He further made a case for smaller twinning projects to be carried out together with countries of the southern shore, thereby complementing the substantial projects.

Mr. **COSTA** (Italy) suggested to organise clean energy trade fairs around the EuroMed region and to address all universities, suggesting to introduce eco-engineering courses. He then reported that environmental pollution in his home region was very probably carcinogenic. The **Chair** answered that there were many studies analyzing the relation between pollution and health.

Ms. **DAĞI** (Turkey) mentioned that raising awareness about environmental protection among young generations is part of the teaching curriculum in Turkish primary schools. She also mentioned the example of Ankara, where the pollution problem could be solved in recent years. Finally, she asked whether it would make sense to impose sanctions on the biggest polluting countries.

Mr. **AL-TARAWNEH** (Jordan) emphasized that pollution did not stop at borders and that due to the significant costs involved, international funds were needed in order to bring about the change to clean energies.

Mr. **NARJISSE** (Morocco) asked why Europe wasn't following the good example of Upper Austria. He also mentioned nuclear developments and made a point in saying that although climate change was indeed a global problem, 80 per cent of the emissions were coming from industrialized countries. He expresses his dismay at the length of the discussion which has been going on for years and he expressed his wish for the Copenhagen Conference to succeed. For that he urged the European Union to put pressure on key polluting countries.

Mr. **ANSCHOBBER** replied that Upper Austria is trying to show that climate protection can be economically successful. He then agreed that the EU has to use its influence in order to turn the Copenhagen Conference into a success. This was supported by Minister **IRANI**, who was adamant that the conference has to be successful.

6. Implementation of the Mediterranean Solar Plan

The Chair welcomed Mr. Pierre **CONVERT** from the French Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development and recalled that during the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee a presentation was given by Ms. H  l  ne PELOSSE, who recently became the Secretary General of the new *International Renewable Energy Agency* (IRENA), based in Abu Dhabi.

Mr. **COSTA** (Italy) then presented his findings regarding the *Mediterranean Solar Plan* (MSP). He began by describing how the Barcelona Process became the Union for the Mediterranean and how the implementation of the MSP was divided into three stages (defining the objectives, pilot phase and large-scale development from 2011 onwards). He then mentioned the need for political support expressed by the *DESERTEC Foundation* and the ministerial meetings that have contributed to shaping the MSP. A major step forward is the availability of substantial grants from financial institutions such as the World Bank. Nevertheless some issues regarding the general regulatory and institutional framework as well as the relationship between the *Union for the Mediterranean* and the *European Commission*, especially in funding matters, remain to be discussed.

Mr. **AL-TARAWNEH** (Jordan) then added that the Mediterranean region had similar problems and that by working together these could be overcome. Major challenges remain, such as the harmonisation of the legal frameworks, the lack of a joint institution for the efficient transfer of energy and the need for more power generation projects. He emphasised the need to further reduce emissions by setting specific time-limits, by exchanging views and experiences at conferences and meetings and by transferring know-how.

The **Chair** thanked the two co-rapporteurs for their contributions and asked all rapporteurs to ensure that their respective contributions would be merged into one report per topic, taking into account any discussions during the current meeting. The target being to have all reports finalised by the time the *EMPA* plenary meets in Jordan next year.

Mr. **CONVERT** was then asked to take the floor and he began by thanking the co-rapporteurs for reflecting the state of play of the MSP so well. He added that the objective of the MSP was to create an electrical grid in the EuroMed region that would allow the exchange of ecological energy. In order to assure this, the project is being developed in close collaboration with all relevant actors in the EuroMed region. The MSP has two pillars: the establishment of a regulatory framework and the realisation of projects. 150 projects were submitted so far in an ongoing call and a priority list of promising submissions is currently being drawn up. These pilot projects will be screened together with international financial institutions with the aim of starting them in 2010. The experience gained from these projects will be important in shaping the MSP and in acquiring financial support from the private sector.

During the discussion, the following delegates asked questions or made comments:

Ms. **MERGEN** (Luxembourg) asked Mr. **COSTA** whether he could elaborate on the reservations that the European Commission has regarding financing aspects within the *Union for the Mediterranean*. Mr. **COSTA** replied that this information came up during a meeting in which he had not personally participated.

Mr. **STEENBLOCK** (Germany) asked if there were any thoughts given to a reduction in the overall energy consumption within the MSP. Mr. **CONVERT** answered that this was indeed an important point but that other initiatives are dealing with the issue and the MSP builds on their work. He also mentioned in that context that solar cooling is a very interesting technology and that it has a promising future. The **Chair** mentioned that the airport of Malta is self-sufficient in its energy consumption due to solar cooling and he promised to send related documents to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

7. The Situation in the Jordan Valley

The **Chair**, being one of the co-rapporteurs, mentioned that the report under consideration was not mandated during the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee in Vienna but that the Enlarged Bureau had requested the report during its meeting held in Amman in July of this year. The report is an integral part of the process that would eventually lead towards having the Jordan valley recognised as a *World Heritage Site* by the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO).

Mr. **SCHENNACH** (Austria) then explained that he had made a first draft of the report and had subsequently sent it to his co-rapporteur, Mr. **BOUHRIZI** (Tunisia), for comments. These have then been integrated into the current version of the report.

The **Chair** then started presenting the report by saying that the word “disaster” in the title had been chosen on purpose in order to describe the situation prevailing in the Jordan valley. The report starts with some background information regarding the geographical location of the valley, the main sources of the Jordan river and its way through the countries in the region. It then analyses existing problems such as the shrinkage of aquifers and other water reservoirs, the strong pollution and the degradation of the tributary streams amongst others. The report then looks at the history of the Palestinian - Israeli conflict and on how strongly this conflict affects the Jordan valley and the corresponding water supply in the region. Both the *Oslo Accords* and the Israeli security fence have a highly problematic impact on the overall situation. Finally, the report looks at possible solutions such as desalination plants, hydro-solar water and energy generation plants and a canal from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, stating that the absolute condition to resolve this situation is a strong and honest commitment from all the parties concerned.

During the discussion, the following delegates asked questions or made comments:

Minister **IRANI** dismissed the doubts of the Chair that the report might be too firm by confirming that the situation is indeed very grave. He then mentioned his appreciation of the efforts to have the Jordan valley registered as a World Heritage Site of *UNESCO*. He stated that regarding the lack of quality and access to water on the Palestinian side and the lack of sewage treatment plants, finding a solution to the problems had to be a common objective for all.

Mr. **SCHENNACH** mentioned how important it was to raise awareness and he told the story of a considerable number of mayors from Jordan, the Palestinian Territories and Israel swimming in the Jordan river together. He then said that the industry in the region was a major problem because the exploitation of natural resources needed a lot of water. Finally, he said that he would add the topic of biodiversity to the report.

8. Water Management

Under this agenda item, Mr. **DEL PICCHIA** (France) presented his views on water management issues in the Mediterranean region. He started by saying that the Middle East and North Africa were the region with the greatest water scarcity worldwide and that urbanization and population growth as well as widespread irrigation in agriculture were intensifying the problem. He then analysed further challenges on both the demand and the supply side, making suggestions on how the situation could possibly be improved:

- by giving equal importance to the supply and demand side;
- by involving the users through e.g. user associations;
- by introducing a realistic tariff structure making infrastructure development viable;
- by cooperating at the regional and international level e.g. through the *Union for the Mediterranean*; and
- by researching adequate technological solutions at the regional and international level.

The second co-rapporteur, Mr. **BENTOUMI** (Algeria), then presented his thoughts on the topic by analysing the links between water management and politics, the economy, society, agriculture, the environment, public health, technology and resources management. He also attached the example of the Algerian water resources policy to the handout of his presentation. Through his analysis he came to a comprehensive set of general recommendations grouped under four main headings:

- Institutional and administrative reform;
- Economic aspects, establishment and maintenance of installations;
- Integrated water management; and
- Training, research and development.

Mr. **BENTOUMI** concluded by saying that a great common effort was needed in order to tackle this crisis and that it had to be contained in order to ensure the safety and security of the peoples in the region and to guarantee the future of coming generations.

During the discussion, the following delegates asked questions or made comments:

Mr. **NARJISSE** (Morocco) supported the need for action on the demand side but he said that a lot of catching up was needed regarding adequate technologies and resource management in order to ensure this. He also stressed that a significant effort was needed when it comes to capacity building as there is a clear lack of qualified workers. Furthermore, it would be very helpful to include a list of success stories in the report. Finally, Mr. NARJISSE said that substantial investments were needed in countries like Morocco in order to e.g. connect all households to water treatment plants and that sufficient funding sources were therefore needed.

Mr. **STEENBLOCK** (Germany) mentioned the serious conflict caused by agriculture, which is not only consuming high amounts of water but which also pollutes and sometimes poisons water. He therefore called both for a strong political signal and for strong efforts in research and development and underlined the respective importance of cooperation between countries.

Mr. **COSTA** (Italy) mentioned that there were many rules and laws with regard to energy consumption but nearly none regarding water consumption. Such rules and standards were urgently needed. He suggested that trainings for farmers e.g. in the use of pesticides would be important.

Mr. **DEL PICCHIA** welcomed the suggestion of attaching a list of success stories to the report. He also mentioned that it was very important to choose the right crops as water requirements are very different. He then mentioned an example of a law regarding water usage for car cleaning in France which is strictly enforced. Finally, he stressed the importance of research centres embedded in universities across the *EMPA* member states.

Mr. **BENTOUMI** mentioned that groundwater was being used extensively and often illegally in the region whereas it really belonged to humanity and should only be used in acute emergencies. He then mentioned a link between water scarcity and terrorism and made a point in saying that water management therefore had to be of interest to the whole international community.

The **Chair** mentioned the fact that water was the source of life and that nobody would be sitting here today without it. Minister **IRANI** then thanked everyone for their very professional and interesting reports and contributions and he said that he was looking forward to the meeting in Jordan next year to continue the deliberations. The **Chair** then closed the meeting by thanking all members and observers of the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water for their attendance and for their valuable contributions.

9. Date and place of next meeting

A meeting at the sidelines of the EMPV plenary in Jordan will be held in March 2010.

13 October 2009

The whole day was dedicated to visiting the so called **Eco Energy Cluster** of the Province of Upper Austria.

Visit of the Water Treatment Plant of Linz AG

Participants were given a presentation and a tour of the facilities. The waste water of the whole city of Linz as well as from 39 municipalities (amounting to 900 km²) is being treated in the Aspen facility. Waste water from industry makes up for around 40 per cent of the total amount.

Company visit of Fronius

Fronius converts energy and is recognised as a technology leader in three sectors:

- In battery charging *Fronius* is the trailblazer for energy- and cost-saving charging technology.
- In the field of welding technology, *Fronius* is a competent partner to the international automotive industry and other metalworking industries where high quality is a major concern.
- Its superior know-how has also established *Fronius* in the field of photovoltaics, where it produces high-quality solar electronics.

Company visit of XOLAR/SUN MASTER

XOLAR is specialized in installing solar thermal collectors on the roofs of private homes, companies and industrial production facilities. *SUN MASTER* is well known on the international market as a reliable producer of top quality solar thermal collectors.

Both companies are housed in new headquarters with extensive production facilities. The facility is the first industrial plant in Europe conceived to be totally independent from fossil-based energy.

Visit of Tostmann Trachten

Tostmann Trachten is a well known manufacturer of Austrian local costumes. 95 per cent of the parts needed to make the costumes are being produced in Austria. Participants were given a tour of the production rooms and had the opportunity to talk to the owner, Mrs. Tostmann.
