

Building Climate Resilience in the Western Mediterranean: The Water and Climate Change Adaptation Nexus

Palacio de las Artes Reina Sofia, Valencia (Spain)
9 March 2022

Presentation

On the occasion of the third Ministerial Conference on Water of the Western Mediterranean Forum (Dialogue 5+5) on 10 March 2022 in Valencia (Spain), convened under the Spanish co-presidency of the 5+5 Dialogue, the MedThink 5+5 network of Western Mediterranean think tanks holds the thematic seminar **“Building Climate Resilience in the Western Mediterranean: Water and Climate Change Adaptation Nexus”** on 9 March 2022. Co-organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO), this event aims to provide a space for dialogue among decision makers, experts, and water professionals from both shores of the Western Mediterranean region to discuss ways to ensure water security by adapting to the impacts of climate change on water resources in the region.

The **MedThink 5+5 network** of think tanks of the Western Mediterranean provides a multidisciplinary platform of debate linked to the 5+5 Dialogue, which contributes both to strengthening the network and to the regional integration based on a bottom-up approach. Since its inception in May 2016, the MedThink 5+5 network has organised several annual fora and thematic seminars back-to-back with Ministerial Conferences of the 5+5 Dialogue, during which experts from the whole of the region analysed the factors underpinning economic, human and sustainable development, as well as security and stability in the Western Mediterranean.

In line with the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 6, and drawing upon the Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean (WSWM) adopted in Algiers in 2015 and its Action Plan (2016), the UfM Water Agenda, as well as the last Mediterranean Water Forum in Malta (2021), this thematic seminar will discuss political, financial, operational and cooperation opportunities to enhance the sustainability and climate-resilience of water management in the ten countries of the Western Mediterranean. Participants from different backgrounds, including public decision-makers, scientific experts, representatives of international organisations and civil society organisations, will highlight regional and national initiatives that are making an impact to build the climate resilience of the Western Mediterranean water sector. The dialogue ensuing from the discussion and the exchange of good practices will lead to the creation of public policy recommendations with the aim of contributing to the work of the 5+5 Dialogue in the field of water management.

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PROGRAMME

9h30 - Opening Session

Carmen Magariños*, Director of Cooperation with Asia and Africa, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

Joan Calabuig*, Regional Secretary for the European Union and External Relations, Government of Valencia

Senén Florensa, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Miguel Polo, President, Jucar River Basin Authority. Secretary General, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO) – Permanent Technical Secretary of the 5+5 Water Strategy for the Western Mediterranean

9h50 - Keynote Speech

Teodoro Estrela, Director General for Water, Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Government of Spain

10h10 - Introduction: Hydrological Consequences of Climate Change in the Western Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Basin is considered a hotspot of climate change. Its impacts – persistent droughts, decrease in precipitations, floods and soil erosion among others – are to be most felt on water resources, aggravating the water security challenge in an already water-stressed region. Considering that water stands at the centre of socioeconomic development, it is crucial to understand how the exacerbation of water pressures by climate change will negatively affect interlinked sectors (agriculture, industry, tourism, sanitation, health, energy, environment, and biodiversity) in the Western Mediterranean, especially to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

*Presentation by **Ramiro Martínez**, General Coordinator, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO) - Coordinator of the 5+5 Water Strategy for the Western Mediterranean*

10h30 - Session 1: Enhancing Water Management for Climate Change Adaptation in the Western Mediterranean

In most of the countries of the Western Mediterranean Basin, while water resources have been heavily exploited, climate change is increasing the pressures on the available resources. In this context, it is of utmost importance to optimise water management, as highlighted by the 5+5 Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean.

What challenges pose climate change to water management? What should be the priority measures to improve water resilience to climate change? How to integrate climate change adaptation measures in the water management strategies? What are the needed reforms in terms of legal frameworks and water governance to better ensure water security in face of climate change threats in the Western Mediterranean?

Chair

Marc García Manzana, Water Commissioner, Júcar River Basin Authority - Spain.
Secretary General, Institut méditerranéen de l'Eau (IME)

Speakers

Charafat Afailal, Steering Committee Member, Global Water Partnership. Former Delegate Minister in charge of Water - Morocco

Abdelkader Dodo, Coordinator of the Water Department, Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS) - Tunisia

Federico Estrada, Director, Centre for Hydrographic Studies, Centre for Public Works Studies and Experimentation (CEDEX)

Sarah Souleymane Cheikh Sidia*, Deputy Director, Centre National des Ressources en Eau (CNRE) - Mauritania

Comments by

Manuel Sapiano, Chief Executive Officer, The Energy & Water Agency - Malta

Désirée Quagliarotti, Researcher, Institute for studies on the Mediterranean (ISMed), National Research Council (CNR) - Italy

Malak Altaeb, Non-Resident Scholar, Middle East Institute - Libya

12h00 Coffee Break

12h30 - Session 2: Improving Resilience to Climate Change through Knowledge and Innovation

Scientific evidence and knowledge are the bases on which to build sound climate change adaptation policies. Models, data sets, vulnerability indicators are key to provide information on phenomena that are often very complex. Innovation and technological progress, especially digital tools and the use of data, are also decisive to increase knowledge regarding climate change impacts on water and help practitioners and decision-makers design well-informed policies. Finally, research and innovation need to be encouraged to develop technologies that will contribute to increase water-use efficiency in the context of climate change.

How to improve access to data and information? How to improve the science-policy interface to implement sound climate change adaptation policies in the water sector? What are the needs in terms of capacity-building and knowledge transfer in the Western Mediterranean? What are the challenges related to knowledge transfer in the sub-region?

Chair

Alain Meyssonier, President, Mediterranean Water Institute (IME) - France

Speakers

Octavi Quintana, Director, PRIMA Foundation – Spain

Nicola Lamaddalena, Deputy Director, Head of the Land and Water Department, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari) – Italy

Fattoum Lakhdari, Director, Centre for Scientific and Technical Research on Arid Regions (C.R.S.T.R.A) - Algeria

Bouabid El Mansouri, President of IAH Moroccan Chapter, International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) / Comité Marocain de l'Association Internationale des Hydrogéologues CM-IAH – Morocco

Comments by

Constantin Tsakas, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Development Policies, Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) - France

Miguel Ángel Pérez, Full Professor, Department of Hydraulic Engineering and Environment, Universitat Politècnica de València - Spain

Rodrigo Proença de Oliveira, Assistant Professor, Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa – Portugal

14h00 - Lunch

15h30 - Session 3: Financing Climate Change Adaptation in the Water Sector: Investments that Make a Difference

As highlighted by the UfM Financial Strategy for Water and the WSWM, there is an important funding gap to improve water management in the region. Mobilising water-related financing resources, especially through non-conventional finance resources, and facilitating access to multilateral finance is a priority to support projects and infrastructures that can make a difference in ensuring water security in the Western Mediterranean.

What kind of financing opportunities are available to Western Mediterranean countries in the field of water management? What role can blended-finance play in addressing the water-climate finance gaps? What are the benefits of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to finance climate change adaptation in the water sector? How to increase access to finance, especially for the private sector?

Chair

Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Director, Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Speakers

María Molina Álvarez de Toledo*, Head of the Department of Cooperation with the Arab World and Asia, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

Karen Colin de Verdière*, Responsible of Division Agriculture, Water, Environment, French Development Agency (AFD)

Thomas Van Gilst*, Head of Division Water Security and Resilience, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Almotaz Abadi, Managing Director, Water and Environment Division, Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS)

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Comments by

Nizar Zaied*, Global Lead Water, Social Infrastructure Division, Economic & Social Infrastructure Department, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

Sondos Njoumi*, Programme Officer, Tunis Office, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP – Med)

Khalid Tamsamani, Professor, Abdelmalek Essaâdi University of Tétouan - Morocco

17h00 - Closing

Roger Albinyana, Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Andrés Perelló, Director General, Casa Mediterráneo

Representative*, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS)

** To be confirmed*