



United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe



Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean  
Secrétariat de l'Union pour la Méditerranée  
الإمانة العامة للإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



Ministry for the Environment,  
Land and Sea



# INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

26 - 27 November 2012  
Chamber of Deputies, Rome, Italy

## Report of the meeting



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## **Preface**

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The International Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean was jointly organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfMS), the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI), with the support of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea.

The Roundtable was held on 26-27 November 2012 in Rome, prior to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) that took place on 28-30 November 2012.

The Roundtable brought together approximately 70 participants including government officials, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders, like targeted representatives of joint bodies of shared basins, regional associations and networks of civil society, actors supporting political processes and regional initiatives, water user associations, donor countries and international institutions and organisations.

The present document reports on the background as well as the context and conclusions of the Roundtable and is structured along the following sections:

- I) Background, explaining the context and the enabling environment within which the Roundtable took place,
- II) Aims and Objectives,
- III) Organisation of work during the Roundtable, and
- IV) Conclusions.

The Report is accompanied by a set of Annexes, including the Final Agenda and the List of Participants.

All related material, including also presentations as well as photos from the Roundtable are available at: [www.gwpmed.org](http://www.gwpmed.org) & [www.unece.org/env/water/southmed\\_roundtable.html](http://www.unece.org/env/water/southmed_roundtable.html)

## I. Background

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Water is an increasingly scarce resource in the Mediterranean, unevenly distributed in time and space, and heavily exploited. Many countries in the Southern Mediterranean are highly dependent on shared water resources, both surface and groundwater. With the current and expected demographic growth, impacts of climate variability and change, and economic and social changes, water management poses a major challenge, and transboundary cooperation in this respect, becomes increasingly crucial in order to prevent conflicts between riparian countries, optimise the use of resources and ensure sustainability, therefore contributing to stability, peace and prosperity in the region.

Though successful examples of efforts towards joint management of transboundary surface and groundwater resources exist in the Southern Mediterranean, effective collaboration among countries remains generally limited. Conflicting water uses, diverse legal and institutional frameworks, different political priorities and strategic interests, and sometimes unequal level of overall development are some of the obstacles inhibiting cooperation. In some cases, turbulent political relations have brought coordination efforts to a deadlock.

A number of actors, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), UNECE, UfM, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GEF, MED EUWI, GWP-Med as well as number of bilateral donors are working at the regional, sub-regional, national and water body levels to assist in overcoming these obstacles and promoting enhanced cooperation for the sustainable management of transboundary water resources.

The exchange of experiences building on the benefits stemming from cooperative management of shared waters have proven to be able to catalyse further progress, as demonstrated for instance by the Regional Dialogue on transboundary water resources management issues in the countries in South-Eastern Europe under the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, UNECE and the UNDP-led GEF IW:LEARN, with the technical facilitation of GWP-Med.

The Water Convention has, since its entry into force in 1992, provided an important framework for improving the management of transboundary surface and groundwater resources in the pan-European region. Building on the successes achieved over the past 20 years, the Parties to the Convention adopted an amendment in 2003 to open the Water Convention for accession by non-UNECE countries. Having received the necessary number of ratifications, the amendments to the Water Convention opening it for accession to all United Nations Member States entered into force on 6 February 2013. The Water Convention therefore turned into a global multilateral legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. In this context, the Water Convention can offer a solid cooperation framework for the countries in the Southern Mediterranean. The experience and the policy and technical guidance developed under it, can be of help for Southern Mediterranean countries to develop cooperation at the regional and basin level, along with the potential transferability and replicability of successful examples/experiences to and within the Southern Mediterranean region.

With the view to strengthen the knowledge basis on shared waters, ESCWA and the ESCWA-BGR Cooperation have been supporting the management of shared water resources in the region through expert consultations and the preparation of the Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia. Additionally, the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) requested the League of Arab States Centre for Water Studies and Arab Water Security and ESCWA to prepare a legal framework on shared waters in the Arab region. The aim of the legal framework is to set the main principles upon which cooperation, management and allocation of shared water resources between riparian countries and aquifer States are to be based. On the basis of AMWC resolutions, the preparation of the legal framework is under way through a consultative, inter-governmental process; the process is in progress and is expected to feed into the next ministerial session of the AMWC foreseen for mid-2013.

From its very beginning in July 2008, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has highlighted the importance of developing a common framework within the region addressing the use and management of freshwater resources. The Annex to the Paris Declaration stated “the importance of water is acknowledged: the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Jordan in October 2008 will define a Mediterranean water strategy”. The Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Meeting in Marseille (4 November 2008) went further in affirming the importance of elaborating a common framework stating “The Euro-Med Ministerial Meeting on water will be held in Jordan. Ministers agree to define the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean along the lines decided by the Heads of State and Government in the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean. They encourage a swift implementation of partnerships in order to implement concrete projects in line with the guidelines of the strategy.” Four years later, with the draft “UfM Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean” pending agreement since May 2010 due to particular political reasons, a common framework on freshwater in the Mediterranean region remains elusive. Nevertheless, the UfM Secretariat perseveres in identifying projects aligned with the broadest objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Another important process with potential added value also in the field of water (and shared waters) concerns the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Platform (WMP) that brings together ten countries bordering the western Mediterranean Basin; namely 5 countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia) and 5 countries of the European Union (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain). With meetings dating back to 1990, the most recent development concerns the Malta Declaration signed during the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of WMP the member states (Valetta, 5-6 October 2012) that called for the definition of a West Mediterranean Water Strategy to promote the conservation of water resources, the diversification of water provision resources and the efficient and sustainable use of water. The Declaration explicitly stated that such a Strategy should be based on the technical work developed within the UfM framework and the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean, while an invitation was extended to the EU Commission to support the endeavour.

## II. Aims and objectives

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In view of the above, the Roundtable provided a platform for the exchange of information and experience on transboundary water resources management across the Mediterranean and for a debate on the progress achieved and the challenges ahead. More specifically, the meeting:

- Debated the current state, the progress achieved and the prevailing challenges for cooperation on transboundary waters in the Southern Mediterranean;
- Exchanged experiences, lessons learnt and showcased good practices of transboundary cooperation from different basins/aquifers, both from the north and the south of the Mediterranean;
- Increased awareness on and understanding of the UNECE Water Convention and its work, including the technical and strategic guidance documents developed under its framework and the practical experiences of its application;
- Highlighted the role of civil society, non-state actors as well as parliamentarians in transboundary water resources management;
- Recognised options at technical and policy levels for the way forward;
- Identified specific cases of cooperation on shared waters that present a certain level of maturity and could be promoted by the riparians as priority projects to be supported.

Moreover, the Roundtable facilitated the discussion about the opening of the Water Convention to countries beyond the ECE region (i.e. the Water Convention becoming a global convention related to transboundary water resources management). The Roundtable indeed preceded the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Water Convention (Rome, 28-30 November 2012), in which the main conclusions of the Roundtable were presented on 28 November. The support expressed by the participants of the Roundtable to the prospect of possible accession by the Southern Mediterranean countries to the Water Convention was brought to the Meeting of the Parties. In this context, Tunisia announced its interest to initiate the process of accession to the Water Convention as soon as possible, and Morocco was also positive to this development. At the same time, the Roundtable offered the opportunity to highlight the linkages and complementarities with the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention and as well as with the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Platform.

### III. Organisation of work

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The Roundtable was structured around nine (9) plenary sessions, including an opening and a closing session. During the sessions, different aspects of transboundary water resources management in the Mediterranean were examined.

More specifically:

**DAY 1, 26 November 2012**

**10:00 – 10:30 Opening Session**

- *Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention*
- *Ms. Maro Evangelidou, Secretary General, Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece*
- *Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*
- *Mr. Rafiq Husseini, Deputy Secretary General, Division for Water and Environment, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)*
- *Mr. Mish Hamid, Project Manager, Global Environment Facility (GEF) IW:Learn III*
- *Mr. Michael Scoullos, Chairman, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)*

The Session opened the Roundtable with statements from representatives of the co-organisers and the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea as the host of the event. Reference was made to some of the key challenges encountered, like the natural decrease of water resources, the population growth in both South and North of the Mediterranean basin, the on-going political turmoil in the region, the economic and social consequences of the financial crisis, the current inadequate

planning processes related to water and the rich set of complexities and interdependencies that does not necessarily allow for rational management of the resources. During the last intervention, the structure of the Roundtable was explained together with the sought objectives.



*Opening Session: Mr. Mish Hamid, Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Ms. Maro Evangelidou, Mr. Rafiq Husseini, Mr. Michael Scoullos (from left to right)*



**10:30 – 11:50 Session 1**

**Setting the scene: Transboundary water resources management around the Mediterranean**

*Moderator: Mr. Rafiq Hussein, UfM*

- An overview: Transboundary water resources management in the Mediterranean  
*Ms. Anthi Brouma, Senior Programme Officer, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)*

- Inventory of shared water resources in Western Asia: Findings on status, challenges and cooperation  
*Mr. Andreas Renck, BGR Principal Advisor/Project Coordinator, ESCWA-BGR Cooperation*

- Status, challenges and responses: North Africa  
*Mr. Khatim Kherraz, Executive Secretary, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)*

- Status, challenges and responses: South Eastern Europe  
*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

Discussion

Session 1 set the stage for the discussions during the Roundtable. It provided an overview on the status, key challenges and opportunities regarding transboundary water resources management across the Mediterranean, including presentations focusing on the situation in the different sub-regions.

The discussions included queries on the compilation of the ESCWA-BGR Inventory and the role/involvement of different actors for its elaboration as well as the current status and further development of the hydrogeological map of Africa that has been in place since 2000. The value of having in place a consultation mechanism since the beginning of the elaboration of an inventory was brought up. The North-Western Sahara Aquifer consultation model was mentioned as a good example/success story with significant replication potential. The NWSA system in addition to having developed an operational database that is accessible to all three riparians, it includes a trilateral consultation structure comprising a steering committee, a coordination unit and an *ad hoc* scientific committee.

The participants acknowledged the difficulty of transposing successful cases without due consideration and adaptation to cultural and contextual specificities, nonetheless recognised the value of constructive experience sharing in order to promote replicability of good examples. At the same time, the issue of data validation was well recognised along with the hesitation of countries for sharing such information. The limited or incomplete knowledge of water resources was also recognised as a serious constraint in sustainable planning. Mauritania expressed interest to engage further on issues of transboundary cooperation, and invited support through technical expertise and resources mobilisation.



**11:50 – 13:30 Session 2**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: global and regional legal instruments**

Moderator: *Mr. Stefano Burchi, International Association for Water Law*

- The UN Watercourses Convention: background, content and relevance  
*Ms. Flavia Loures, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)*

- The UNECE Water Convention: from regional to global?  
*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

- Fostering cooperation on transboundary aquifer resources  
*Ms. Alice Aureli, Chief of Section, Groundwater Systems, Natural Sciences Sector, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*

- Developing a regional convention on shared water in the Arab region  
*Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, First Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

Discussion

Session 2 focused on legal instruments that can be used to facilitate cooperation efforts over shared water bodies and examined how they have been used and what opportunities they offer. The presentation of these instruments aimed, in addition to facilitate discussion later on, to raise awareness and build capacity on the different available tools. The complementarity and mutual reinforcement of the available legal instruments was highlighted.

The discussions triggered queries as to the modalities for the accession to and implementation of the different instruments, the usage of and accompanying tools as well as the resulting opportunities for fostering transboundary cooperation. The time element entailed in transboundary processes, often requiring long deliberations in order to reach a stage of maturity, was particularly stressed together with the need for continuous engagement of the involved stakeholders.

Several of the country representatives expressed positively as to the potential benefits of acceding regional or international conventions, but required further information on the added value and complementarities among different conventions in their particular country contexts. Participants also recognised the value of holding the Roundtable back-to-back with the Water Convention MoP in order to witness first-hand such meetings and the interaction among countries.

**14:45– 16:00 Session 3**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Legal and institutional aspects**

Moderator: *Ms. Maro Evangelidou, Secretary General, Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece*

- Establishing legal and institutional instruments: making use of a shared vision for the management of transboundary water resources

*Mr. Dejan Panovski, Member, Drin Core Group*

- The Necessity of developing a global transboundary groundwater framework: Examples from the Southern Mediterranean

*Mr. Mohamed Elrawady, Water Resources Specialist, Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)*

- A framework for joint monitoring and assessment in the North Western Sahara Aquifer

*Mr. Hervé Trebossen, Scientific and Technical Advisor, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)*

Discussion

This session, based on cases from all shores of the Mediterranean, discussed different legal and institutional aspects for promoting cooperation and management of transboundary water resources with examples from specific case studies.

During the discussions the value of having a champion facilitating a dialogue (whether an international organisation, a stakeholder organisation, a country or a mix of actors) was highlighted; initiating a dialogue was recognised as a most important step with high potential for triggering a spill-over effect. The example of the North-Western Sahara Aquifer was appreciated as an important process in North Africa for engaging riparian countries and with the need to further support/enhance the consultation process among the three involved parties. The case of the Drin River Basin Dialogue was received most positively, particularly given its political and transboundary context and the potential of becoming a reference case for replication.

**16:30 – 18:15 Session 4**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Jointly managing water resources**

Moderator: *Mr. Vangelis Constantianos, Executive Secretary, GWP-Med*

- Jointly managing water resources: examples from Jordan

*Mr. Mohammad Alatrash, Director, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan*

- Cooperative water management in the Sava River Basin

*Mr. Samo Grošelj, Deputy Secretary for Protection of Waters and Aquatic Eco-system, Sava River Basin Commission*

- Creating the knowledge and instruments for the management of Karstic Aquifers

*Mr. Neno Kukuric, Project Director, Dinaric Karstic Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS) project*

- Making use of ecosystem concept in transboundary water negotiations: the Iraqi Marshlands case within the Tigris-Euphrates system

*Mr. Fouad Abousamra, Regional Coordinator, Ecosystems Management, United Nations Environment Program – Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP ROWA)*

Discussion

This session focused on experiences and lessons learnt, both positive and negative, from examples of joint management of shared resources. The presentations dealt with technical and strategic issues related to joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary surface and groundwater, including information management and exchange. The fact that good governance at transboundary level requires good governance at national level was pinpointed. The importance of stakeholder involvement, including NGOs engagement, from the beginning of the process were highlighted as well as the challenge of maintaining the level of government involvement at a high level throughout the duration of the process. Moreover, the presented cases offered the ground for discussions on positive examples of cooperation at basin level through an integrated approach, including the protection of ecosystems. The participants acknowledged the case of Sava River Basin as a valuable example of successful cooperation amidst a turbulent sub-region that not so long ago was engaged in armed conflict.

## DAY 2

### 09:00 – 11:00 Session 5

#### Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Engaging the stakeholders and building their capacity

Moderator: *Ms. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou, Chairperson of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), Chairperson of the Environment Committee of the Hellenic Parliament*

- Capacity building on water diplomacy and negotiation skills in the Arab region  
*Ms. Chahra Ksia, President, Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security, League of Arab States*

- The Dialogue Approach in Transboundary Cooperation concerning Ecosystem Conservation

*Mr. Nejib Benessaiah, Coordinator, MedWet*

- Capacity building within the Palestinian Water Authority

*Ms. Najwan Rukab, Joint Water Committee Unit, Palestinian Water Authority*

- NGO involvement in transboundary water resources management

*Ms. Thomie Vlachogianni, Programme Officer, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)*

- Strengthening Institutions for Transboundary Waters in Africa, ANBO/GWP Pan-African Project with EU support

*Mr. Francois Brikke, Senior Network Officer, Global Water Partnership (GWP)*

Discussion

Session 5 brought up the role of key-actors and stakeholders in promoting transboundary water resources management for greater participation, equity and accountability along with ways to strengthen their capacity. The speakers shared experiences with regard to non-government stakeholders' participation, and the importance of building capacities of the range of actors involved.

During the discussions the opportune timing of the MedWet project in Morocco was highlighted, as it coincided with the National Water Debate

assisting with the signing of the aquifer contract for the case of Nasra. The value of having the basin agency involved in the process was stressed, while the actual contract was characterised as the cement in the dialogue process; the replicability potential of such example was widely recognised.

The participants emphasised the need for planning of targeted capacity building, tailored to the different audiences and particularly towards civil society. However, scepticism was raised as to the sustainability and true capacity of the plethora of non-governmental organisations that have been set up in the Southern Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. On the other end, some participants expressed hesitation as to the governments' appreciation of the work conducted by civil society and the recurrent involvement that is allowed/foreseen in various projects.



*Session 5: Mr. Nejib Benessaiah, Mr. Francois Brikke, Ms. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou, Ms. Najwan Rukab, Ms. Thomie Vlachogianni, Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi (from left to right)*

**11:30 – 13:00 Session 6**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Mobilising Financial Resources**

*Panel Discussion*

Moderator: *Mr. Chris Severin, Senior Environmental Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

- *Ms. Amal Salama, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt*

- *Mr. Moncef Rekaya, Director of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Tunisia*

- *Mr. Fuad Bateh, Senior Adviser, Division for Water & Environment, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)*

- *Ms. Sibylle Vermont, Swiss Development Cooperation*

Discussion

This session focused on experiences coming from different stakeholders (beneficiary countries, donors, regional organisations) with regard to the mobilisation of financing for transboundary cooperation. The panel interventions focused on both existing and planned lines of work.

During the discussion, many participants recognised the need for further mobilization of financing both from riparians and the development assistance partners as well as for assistance by donors and international organisations for project preparation. Discussions also focused on the importance of engaging local communities and visible to them benefits stemming from transboundary collaboration. Donor representatives expressed the commitment and readiness to contribute to country needs, and appreciated the potential value of having in place a legislative framework for transboundary waters.

Several existing initiatives and projects were mentioned during the discussion, accompanied by calls for engagement by more countries and donors. During the session the case of the Medjerda River (shared between Algeria and Tunisia) was mentioned and support was requested for moving forward with the transboundary cooperation. Medjerda was recognised as a mature case of cooperation on shared waters.

**14:00-16:00 Session 7**  
**Advancing joint action**

Facilitated discussion on, *inter alia*:

- *Would a Mediterranean process to assist North-South and South-South exchange of information and knowledge, build capacity and assist dialogue on technical aspects of transboundary water resources management be beneficial for advancing cooperation in the region?*
- *Are there transboundary basins / areas in which there are specific opportunities to further cooperation? Are there specific cases of cooperation on shared waters that can be promoted by the riparians as priority projects to be supported?*
- *Is the opening of the UNECE Water Convention an opportunity for countries in the Mediterranean?*

Moderators:

*Mr. Rafiq Husseini, UfM*

*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

*Mr. Michael Scoullos, GWP-Med*

*Photos from the 7<sup>th</sup> Session*



*Right photo: Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Mr. Rafiq Husseini,  
Mr. Michael Scoullos (from left to right)*

The Roundtable's penultimate session examined ways of promoting joint action and cooperation on transboundary water resources management through discussion on three key questions. The interventions focused on opportunities and challenges for improving transboundary cooperation in the region.

During the discussion, the participants raised the issue of acceding to existing regional or international conventions versus elaborating on a new convention tailored to the needs of the region/countries of the region. In that respect, the participants asked UNECE to provide further information on the Water Convention when transmitting the Roundtable's message(s) to higher levels in the countries' hierarchy. Some participants raised their concern of having two international framework Conventions regarding the management of transboundary waters, both with a global scope (once the amendment to the Water Convention would enter into force). Clarification was requested about the similarities and the differences between the Water Convention and the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (1997 Convention or UN Watercourses Convention).

Therefore, in the course of the interaction, UNECE clarified that:

1. Both Conventions address the same subject-matter. Their respective provisions are mutually compatible, but also of legal consistency and of synergic complementarity. Several countries have ratified both Conventions.
2. The Water Convention has entered into force (38 Parties in November 2012) and has a long trajectory of application and practice behind it, while the 1997 Convention one has not as yet entered into force and has not been applied in practice. Throughout the 20 past years of its application, a large number of soft law and normative law instruments have been developed, under the Water Convention, which are of great usefulness not only to those who are Party but also to those who aspire to be (for example Guide to implementing the Convention, Guidance on water and adaptation to climate change...).
3. The main difference between the 2 conventions lies in the existence of an institutional framework under the Water Convention (i.e. a Meeting of the Parties, a Secretariat and a number of working groups, task forces and other subsidiary bodies, which are responsible for the implementation of the Convention's workplan). It allows for assisting the Parties in complying with the Water Convention's provisions. There is no such institutional framework under the 1997 Convention. Another added value of the Water Convention is the mandatory character of institutional cooperation between Riparian Parties.
4. The Water Convention has originally been negotiated as a regional instrument by countries of the ECE, while the 1997 Convention was adopted in the context of a global negotiation. But with the entry into force of the amendment to the Water Convention, the Convention turns into a global instrument. It will allow for accession of countries from beyond the ECE region, therefore broadening the pool of experience available and fostering exchange to support transboundary water cooperation.

It was recognised that although a dialogue with/among stakeholders is essential, when it comes to formal engagements and ratification of legal documents, the handling and decision rests at the sole discretion of governments. In that respect, the value of both consultation processes and capacity building was particularly accentuated, while at the same time it was recognised that the international environment can be utilised for providing support on needed aspects as appropriate in the country contexts. Given the politically turbulent environment of Southern Mediterranean, particular questions were raised also as to the arbitration mechanisms and the conflict resolution tools that are available within the convention(s).



**16:30-17:00 Session 8**  
**Conclusions and Closing**

Conclusions and closing of the Roundtable by the co-organisers

During the closing session the draft conclusions of the Roundtable were presented to the participants, who endorsed them as valid and reflecting the context of the 2-day meeting. The Conclusions document forms the final section of the Report (Section IV below).

Overall the importance of transboundary water resources management for the sustainable development and socio-economic trajectory of the Mediterranean region was highly stressed. Cases for promoting transboundary cooperation were identified, including the case of the Medjerda River (shared between Algeria and Tunisia) where support was requested to enhance the bilateral cooperation. The need for targeted and quality capacity building at all levels was strongly identified along with the required political commitment for effective transboundary cooperation. The added value of meetings such as the Roundtable was highlighted by the participants and the co-organisers were encouraged to follow-up with additional meetings in the near future.

Photos from the Roundtable:



## IV. Conclusions

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This section includes the full conclusions document, as prepared, presented and endorsed during the Rome Roundtable.

1. There was a general consensus about the usefulness of the Roundtable with regard to transboundary water resources management. Everybody stressed the urgency of further working in the area of transboundary waters since an important proportion of the waters used by most countries are external and under stress, given the natural water scarcity in the region, the geomorphology, the rapidly growing population, the demographic trends and the already evident impacts of climate change.
2. The provisions and potential application of the UNECE Water Convention and the UN Watercourses Convention were explained. The countries of the region were encouraged to consider joining in, as the Conventions provide useful frameworks for advancing transboundary water cooperation. It was clarified that these Conventions are not in competition with each other, nor with the Regional Convention on Shared Water in the Arab Region being developed by UN ESCWA under the mandate of the Arab Ministerial Council, or with the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean. The role of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) emerging from the Ministerial Declaration of the Dead Sea (December 2008) in encouraging transboundary cooperation in the Mediterranean in the area of water, including the supervision of the development of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean and with mandate to label and make visible relevant transboundary water projects was explained and partners were encouraged to further utilise the frameworks and opportunities offered by the UfM.
3. The Roundtable reviewed developments in transboundary cooperation in the Mediterranean, including positive developments that have been obtained recently in the Northern shore of the region such as the cases of the River Sava Commission, the Drin Dialogue etc that were stimulated and facilitated by International Initiatives & Organisations (such as the MED EUWI, UNECE, GEF/IW and GWP-Med). Based on these positive examples/cases, the International Initiatives & Organisations were encouraged and are now expected to facilitate the transfer of experience among areas and countries in the South-Eastern Mediterranean in the field of transboundary water resources management, in close cooperation with the countries and the relevant institutions and stakeholders.
4. The meeting also informed about serious and continuous efforts that have been invested by a number of institutions in the South and East coasts of the Mediterranean to enhance transboundary water management, with some encouraging results having been obtained by the League of Arab States, ESCWA-BGR, OSS, and CEDARE. Nevertheless, there was recognition of the prevailing relatively limited knowledge and expertise at basin level in dealing with the various aspects of management of shared water bodies.
5. It was reported during the meeting that a new initiative for transboundary cooperation is being developed between Algeria and Tunisia for the river Medjerda within the AMCOW framework with the support of GWP-Med. A concrete request was made for the support of the initiative by International Organisations and donors to address issues that include, among others, droughts and floods and appropriate adaptation to climate change.
6. The role of International Organisations, donors and projects, which could support transboundary water dialogues, was recognized as instrumental in developing and sustaining, for at least a critical minimum period, the necessary dialogues and processes in the region, until they become self-sustained.
7. There was a genuine interest for sharing experiences and upgrading the role, contribution and constructive/effective involvement of non-state stakeholders, NGOs and the Civil

Society at large in Transboundary Water Resources dialogues. The successful experiences of regional networks (such as MedWet and MIO-ECSDE) in transboundary dialogues has to be harnessed in full for the benefit of the Southern countries as well, taking, of course, into account the conditions and developments in the riparian countries.

8. Individual Parliamentarians need also to be approached, appropriately informed in depth and involved in promoting transboundary dialogues. The role of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) could be very useful to this end.
9. Capacity building activities in the area of transboundary waters seem to be necessary and urgent at all levels in the countries of the region, provided that they are well targeted (towards all involved stakeholders) and of an appropriate quality and potential.
10. There was a clear message about the importance of transboundary cooperation for the stability, peace and sustainable development of the region and the mobilization of political commitment among riparian countries and the international community in order to achieve this goal.
11. There was wide recognition of the Roundtable's added value and the co-organisers were encouraged to follow-up with the organisation of additional meetings in the near future.

## **ANNEX I**

### **Agenda of the Roundtable**



United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe



Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean  
Secrétariat de l'Union pour la Méditerranée  
الأمانة العامة للإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



Ministry for the Environment,  
Land and Sea



## INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

26 - 27 November 2012  
Chamber of Deputies, Rome, Italy

### Agenda

#### DAY 1 - 26 November 2012

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Registration: 09:00-10:00

#### 10:00 – 10:30 Opening Session

- Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention
- Ms. Maro Evangelidou, Secretary General, Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece
- Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Mr. Rafiq Hussein, Deputy Secretary General, Division for Water and Environment, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- Mr. Mish Hamid, Project Manager, Global Environment Facility (GEF) IW:Learn III
- Mr. Michael Scoullas, Chairman, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)

**10:30 – 11:50 Session 1**

**Setting the scene: Transboundary water resources management around the Mediterranean**

The session will provide an overview on the status, key challenges and opportunities regarding transboundary water resources management across the Mediterranean, including presentations focusing on the situation in the different sub-regions.

Moderator: *Mr. Rafiq Husseini, Deputy Secretary General, Division for Water and Environment, UfM*

- An overview: Transboundary water resources management in the Mediterranean

*Ms. Anthi Brouma, Senior Programme Officer, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)*

- Inventory of shared water resources in Western Asia: Findings on status, challenges and cooperation

*Mr. Andreas Renck, BGR Principal Advisor/Project Coordinator, ESCWA-BGR Cooperation*

- Status, challenges and responses: North Africa

*Mr. Khatim Kherraz, Executive Secretary, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)*

- Status, challenges and responses: South Eastern Europe

*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

Discussion

**11:50 – 13:30 Session 2**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: global and regional legal instruments**

This session will focus on legal instruments that can be used to facilitate cooperation efforts over shared water bodies; how they have been used, what opportunities they offer. The meeting will discuss the extent to which these instruments can facilitate cooperation.

Moderator: *Mr. Stefano Burchi, International Association for Water Law*

- The UN Watercourses Convention: background, content and relevance

*Ms. Flavia Loures, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)*

- The UNECE Water Convention: from regional to global?

*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

- Fostering cooperation on transboundary aquifer resources

*Ms. Alice Aureli, Chief of Section, Groundwater Systems, Natural Sciences Sector, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*

- Developing a regional convention on shared water in the Arab region

*Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, First Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

Discussion

**13:30 – 14:45 Lunch Break**

**14:45– 16:00 Session 3**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Legal and institutional aspects**

The session, based on cases from the Mediterranean, will discuss different legal and institutional aspects for promoting cooperation and management of transboundary water resources.

Moderator: *Mr. Vangelis Constantianos, Executive Secretary, GWP-Med*

- Establishing legal and institutional instruments: making use of a shared vision for the management of transboundary water resources

*Mr. Dejan Panovski, Member, Drin Core Group*

- The Necessity of developing a global transboundary groundwater framework: Examples from the Southern Mediterranean

*Mr. Mohamed Elrawady, Water Resources Specialist, Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)*

- A framework for joint monitoring and assessment in the North Western Sahara Aquifer

*Mr. Hervé Trebossen, Scientific and Technical Advisor, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)*

Discussion

**16:00– 16:30 Coffee Break**

**16:30 – 18:15 Session 4**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Jointly managing water resources**

This session will focus on experiences and lessons learnt, both positive and negative, from examples of joint management of shared resources.

Moderator: *Mr. Fadi Comair, former President, Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO) (tbc)*

- Jointly managing water resources: examples from Jordan

*Mr. Mohammad Alatrash, Director, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan*

- Cooperative water management in the Sava River Basin

*Mr. Samo Grošelj, Deputy Secretary for Protection of Waters and Aquatic Eco-system, Sava River Basin Commission*

- Creating the knowledge and instruments for the management of Karstic Aquifers

*Mr. Neno Kukuric, Project Director, Dinaric Karstic Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS) project*

- Making use of ecosystem concept in transboundary water negotiations: the Iraqi Marshlands case within the Tigris-Euphrates system

*Mr. Fouad Abousamra, Regional Coordinator, Ecosystems Management, United Nations Environment Program – Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP ROWA)*

Discussion

**20:00 Dinner**



**09:00 – 11:00 Session 5**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Engaging the stakeholders and building their capacity**

The session will examine stakeholder engagement in facilitating transboundary cooperation and ways to strengthen their capacity.

Moderator: *Ms. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou, Chairperson of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), Chairperson of the Environment Committee of the Hellenic Parliament*

- Capacity building on water diplomacy and negotiation skills in the Arab region  
*Ms. Chahra Ksia, President, Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security, League of Arab States*
  
- The Dialogue Approach in Transboundary Cooperation concerning Ecosystem Conservation  
*Mr. Nejb Benessaiah, Coordinator, MedWet*
  
- Capacity building within the Palestinian Water Authority  
*Ms. Najwan Rukab, Joint Water Committee Unit, Palestinian Water Authority*
  
- NGO involvement in transboundary water resources management  
*Ms. Thomie Vlachogianni, Programme Officer, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSD)*
  
- Strengthening Institutions for Transboundary Waters in Africa, ANBO/GWP Pan-African Project with EU support  
*Mr. Francois Brikk, Senior Network Officer, Global Water Partnership (GWP)*

Discussion

**11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break**

**11:30 – 13:00 Session 6**

**Creating the enabling environment for cooperation: Mobilising Financial Resources**

The session will focus on experiences coming from different stakeholders (beneficiary countries, donors, other organisations) with regard to the mobilisation of financing for transboundary cooperation.

*Panel Discussion*

Moderator: *Mr. Chris Severin, Senior Environmental Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

- *Ms. Amal Salama, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt*
- *Mr. Moncef Rekaya, Director of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Tunisia*
- *Mr. Fuad Bateh, Senior Adviser, Division for Water & Environment, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)*

**13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break**

**14:00-16:00 Session 7**

**Advancing joint action**

The session will examine ways of promoting joint action and cooperation on transboundary water resources management.

Facilitated discussion on, *inter alia*:

- *Would a Mediterranean process to assist North-South and South-South exchange of information and knowledge, build capacity and assist dialogue on technical aspects of transboundary water resources management be beneficial for advancing cooperation in the region?*
- *Are there transboundary basins / areas in which there are specific opportunities to further cooperation? Are there specific cases of cooperation on shared waters that can be promoted by the riparians as priority projects to be supported?*
- *Is the opening of the UNECE Water Convention an opportunity for countries in the Mediterranean?*

Moderators:

*Mr. Rafiq Hussein, UfM*

*Ms. Francesca Bernardini, UNECE*

*Mr. Michael Scullios, GWP-Med*

**16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break**

**16:30-17:00 Session 8**

**Conclusions and Closing**

Conclusions and closing of the Roundtable by the co-organisers

**20:00 Dinner**

**28-30 November 2012: Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention**

## **ANNEX II**

### **List of participants**

## List of Participants



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26 – 27 November 2012, Rome, Italy

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