

Tables on the Mediterranean basins Definitions of variables

Precipitations are quantities of water falling to earth within a specified period of time (yearly). They are expressed in mm/year or in km³/year.

Renewable natural fresh water resources (of surface and underground), expressed in km³/year, represent the maximum potential of water resources "offered by nature" on average. They are the sum of the product from surface and underground flows forming the "**Internal natural water resources**" and those generated by external resources or "**Actual external inflow**" (surface or underground flows coming from other countries).

The "**Renewable water resources**" consist of flows and not of stocks, like for other raw materials, and these fresh water flows are naturally maintained by the water cycle with its continental influences. The average values of renewable natural fresh water resources, calculated over a long period, characterize the hydrology of the basin.

A part only of these natural resources is exploitable because of various technical-economic and environmental constraints. The **actual exploitable resources** are about half or the third (according to the countries) of the renewable natural resources of to practical and socio-economic constraints (hardly a quarter of the total is formed by regular flows) and environmental (in particular for the water ecosystems conservation).

The "**Total water demand**" of quantity is considered here as all the volumes of water mobilised (not including « green » water and « virtual » water) to meet the various uses, including the volumes « lost » in transport and usual practices. The demand is, therefore, the addition of the water withdrawals, the imported water and unconventional production (desalination, clean wastewater reuse, drainage, etc.).

Green water is the transpiration which rises directly from precipitations; it is about rain agriculture, pastures, forests, etc.

Virtual water corresponds to the volume of water necessary to the manufacture of a foodstuff (not to be confused with its water content). It is usually expressed in liters of water per kilo. For example, approximately 1 500 liters of water is needed to produce one kilo of corn, 4 500 liters for one kg of rice and 100 000 liters for one kilo of aluminium.

The **withdrawals** are defined by the sum of the volumes of the annual withdrawals of conventional renewable natural water for all uses, including the losses during transport, in reference to one specified year. (They exclude the extractions from non-renewable water, to be counted separately).

The **nonrenewable water resources** (fossil water) have presented in a reserve natural, known as aquifer, for one period of time which exceeds the human life time, they are not renewable on a human scale.

The **conventional water resources** are offered directly by the natural environment (continental fresh water).

The **nonconventional water resources** are produced starting from raw material not directly usable (re-use of waste water, drainage, desalination of sea water and brackish water) or being able to result from artificial transformation of the cycle of water (caused precipitations, transport of iceberg).