

Progress of the Mediterranean countries towards sustainable development

Measuring the progress of the Mediterranean countries towards sustainable development constitutes a real challenge that requires consideration of the 3 tiers of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.

It relies on the implementing of the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and is based on the 34 priority indicators.

In the absence of a composite indicator, it is possible to follow the paths taken by the Mediterranean countries on the social, economic and environmental axes using the UNDP for Human Development Index and the WWF Ecological Footprint.

In this graph, the situation of a country is considered as compatible with sustainable development if its HDI is greater than 0.8 and its ecological footprint less than 1.8 hectares per inhabitant.

In 2006, none of the Mediterranean countries was situated in the area (HDI>0.8; EF<1.8) referred to as "sustainable development area"*.

In the graph opposite, all of the Mediterranean countries (with data available in 1996 and 2006) excepted Croatia, Greece and Spain are, however, moving towards this sustainable development area.

* This observation is also applicable to all of the countries on this planet.

Two groups of countries stand out and correspond to the classification of the countries according to the income level used by the World Bank:

- Middle-income countries, (Gross national income per inhabitant between 905 and 11 115 USD in 2006), with a low HDI and ecological footprint and which demonstrate great progress in terms of HDI.
- High-income countries (Gross national income per inhabitant greater than or equal to 11 116 USD in 2006) with a high HDI and ecological footprint and with a reduction of the ecological footprint is more noticeable than progress in terms of HDI.

These two groups of countries include respectively

- The southern and eastern Mediterranean countries and the Balkan countries.
- The Mediterranean countries that are members of the EU and Israel.

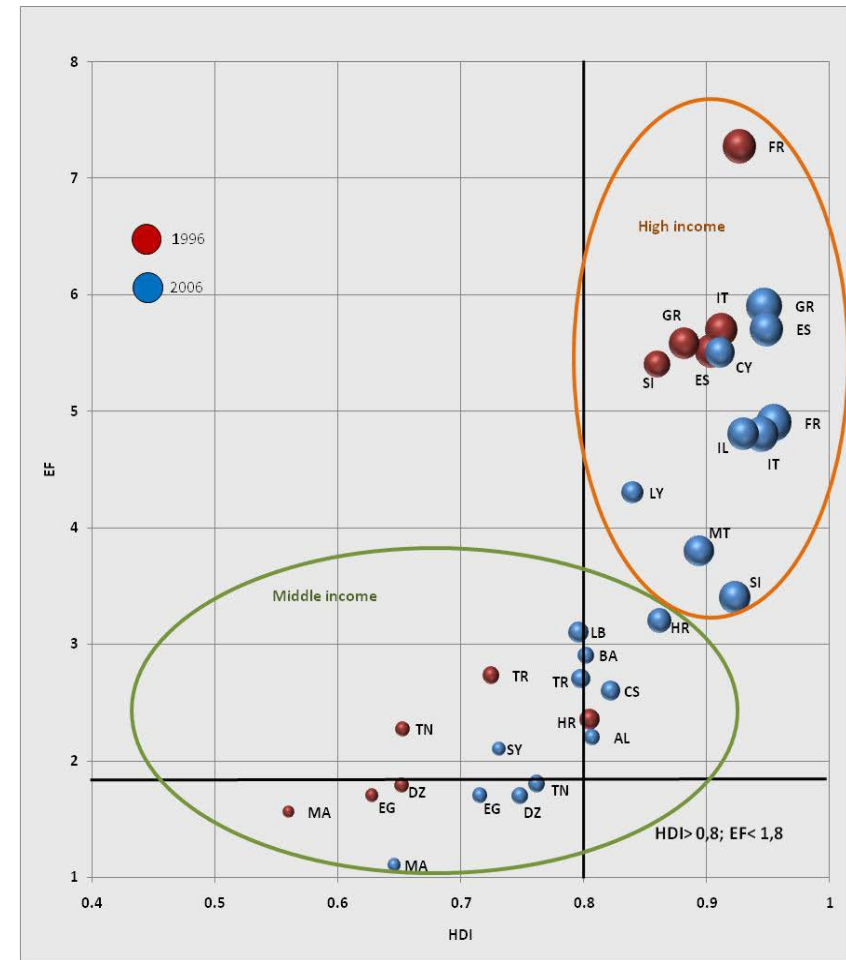
The challenge for the first group countries is to continue their economic development in improving their HDI, and at the same time to take the necessary measures to avoid increasing or to reduce their ecological footprint.

The challenge for the second group countries is mainly to reduce their ecological footprint, while keeping their HDI at a high level.

Sources / References

UNDP, WWF, Zoological Society of London, Global Footprint Network and World Bank.

Human Development Index and ecological footprint per capita in the Mediterranean countries (1996 - 2006) according to income level



Source: UNDP, WWF-Global Footprint Network, World Bank

Notes : Libya belongs to the middle income group)
The 2006 ecological footprint is the 2005 value