

Climate change in the Mediterranean

« Making the Mediterranean a showcase for combating climate change »

Marseilles, 22-23 October, 2008

Main conclusions presented by the Blue Plan

The seminar on « Climate change in the Mediterranean: from acknowledgement to action » was held in Marseilles on 22 and 23 October, 2008, within the framework of the work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and following on from the guidance given by the heads of State and government at the Summit for the Mediterranean held in Paris on 13 July 2008. The main conclusions which the Blue Plan draws from this seminar are as follows:

1) The Facts

There is today consensus within the international scientific community as concerns global warming. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has, in particular, confirmed the existence of abnormal global warming unprecedented in scale and speed, of which the root cause is human activity.

The IPCC has also established that, given the fragile nature of the ecosystems which comprise it and the numerous pressures stemming from its demography and economy, the region to which the Mediterranean countries belong is one of the areas most vulnerable to the various impacts of the climate change currently underway.

These impacts are likely to trigger a rise in sea-levels, greater coastal erosion, a weakening of natural coastal defences, whilst also placing a strain on ecosystems already affected by deforestation, increasing water scarcity, disrupting fish stocks and prompting the renewed outbreak of epizootics and vectoral diseases.

The climate threat is arising at a time when most Mediterranean countries are also having to face up to the energy, economic and ecological challenges of globalisation against a backdrop of general population growth. The combination of these various challenges could well affect the efficiency if not the relevance of the economic investments made over the last few years and give rise to unprecedented social problems.

2) Recommendations

Given this state of affairs, making the Mediterranean a showcase for combating climate change implies:

At scientific level,

-The full participation of scientific and academic stakeholders and networks from the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries in designing and implementing scientific work on climate change, modelling in particular,

- Setting up a genuine information system on climate change, initially pooling and drawing on existing data and subsequently identifying and seeking out any missing data, particularly through enhanced regional cooperation, driven by those institutions which are active in the field,

At political level,

- Including the climate factor in regional and national planning and decision-taking processes as of now,

- including impact and vulnerability to climate change in public and territorial policy by striving to develop integrated approaches, which will allow sectoral work to be interlinked,

At financial level,

- the creation of financial instruments by the partners in development, aimed at supporting the Mediterranean countries' efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to future changes in the climate and setting up a forum for exchange to deliberate together the eligibility criteria of Mediterranean projects for the Adaptation Fund decided upon in Bali,

At institutional level,

- The regular organisation at Mediterranean level – under the aegis of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and the Blue Plan, for example- of events dedicated to climate change, with particular focus on drawing up, calculating and regularly producing indicators on the impact of climate change in the region, the exchange of good mitigation but particularly adaptation practices, as well as the adaptation measures to be brought in and the means to finance them.

- continuing the work first begun by MAP's Cleaner Production Centre, in order to measure the carbon footprint of the various sectors of consumption, and by the Blue Plan to estimate the cost of non-action on combating climate change in the Mediterranean region,

At public mobilisation level,

- taking account of the essential role of local authorities, associations and NGOs in mobilising the public to combat climate change and involving them closely in work and thinking in this field.

Marseilles, 23 October, 2008