

## **PRELIMINARY VIEWS ON THE CONTEXT AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES OF THE DRAFT EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY**

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The announcement of the drafting of any new Euro-Med strategic document of the EU is by itself an important undertaking, stimulating decision makers and raising expectations particularly among NGOs and other civil society groups and the part of the society which still hopes to see a better future world emerging out of sound policies and their proper implementation. Of course one of the exercises I still find difficult to perform after 30 years in the area of environment policies is to jump over the gap between good intentions described in Policies and the results of their implementation (or lack of it..)

The present initiative of the European Parliament and of Yves Pietrasanta, MEP in particular, the Heinrich Böll Foundation and WWF in inviting here many of us who belong in these good willing groups, is one more attempt to make sure that a new opportunity will not be lost and that such a strategy will reflect the vision for the world, Europe and the Euro-Med region for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and simultaneously will serve as a concrete strategic commitment to be adopted by the Ministerial meeting of Athens in July 2002 vis-à-vis the Johannesburg Summit.

Since until today I didn't have any draft document or transparencies of the strategy I decided to prepare my intervention in an abstract way, by expressing my expectations from such a strategy, comparing them with the mandate given by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Euro – Med region last November in Brussels; and by suggesting a number of criteria and points to be included in the strategy. These elements also are linked to previous initiatives.

In my point of view, we should clarify that such a strategy could hardly influence the Johannesburg Summit in any direct way, simply because it will not be formally there during the Prep – Com meetings. Drafted by the EU Commission, it could be regarded as an encouraging example of the EU concerns for its neighborhood, which is also an actual north-south interface, but nevertheless it would remain an extension of EU policies and strategies unless it is debated and drafted in a different way involving stakeholders from all over the Mediterranean. The final ownership of the strategy very much depends upon the way in which the whole process will be run.

On the other hand, in whatever form, it could decisively enhance the efforts to raise the profile of the Mediterranean as a successful example of a region which, despite its accumulated problems due to conflicts based on serious differences of national, ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic and religious nature, manages to sustain common institutions and formulate and implement collectively a large number of ambitious environmental and sustainable development policies mainly under the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, the innovative scheme of MCSDE (Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development) and the Euro-Med Partnership. If properly formulated it could play an extremely useful and far reaching role and could substantially assist in dealing with the main regional problems.

Compared to my expectations at least the formal “mandate” given for the July 2002, Athens meeting (perhaps only for its agenda) as I understand it from the preparatory documents received: (viz: to provide fresh impulse to the Short and Medium term Priority Actions (SMAP); to develop a strategy for better integration of Environmental Protection into national Policies; and to organize more efficient co-ordination and consistency between the various (relevant) International Environmental activities, seems to me rather “pale” and somehow failing to grasp and build upon the dynamic interlinks between the environmental protection agenda and the overall sustainable development agenda. The two messages we have received until now from two different commission services (RELEX and DG Environment) point to different directions, the one being minimalistic and the other maximalistic.

Personally I hope that the draft Sustainable Development Strategy for the EuroMed will not be restricted by the key points of the Ministerial meeting agenda but will go far beyond following the example of the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Ministers for the Environment at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention held in Monte Carlo in November 2001 and intended as an input for Johannesburg. It is noteworthy that the Declaration (see attachment) which includes many progressive elements (which were left out from the UNECE Declaration of September 2001) was based on the outcome of a multi-stakeholder meeting organized in a very systematic way by MIO-ECSDE in collaboration and with the support of UNEP/MAP, the European Commission and the Principality of Monaco. It is noteworthy that the same results were also used for the MED NGO declaration for Johannesburg adopted in Nice earlier this month (Jan 2002) showing the importance of a well conducted open dialogue.

A EuroMed Sustainable Development strategy should, in my point of view, be inspired by and follow a similar, all embracing open participatory approach. Furthermore, it should combine certain characteristics and include elements of the following ten points:

1. It should secure coherence with the overall EuroMed policies and the EU Sustainability Strategy, as it was developed through the Cardiff process and other relevant initiatives. It should also take into account the outcome of the Strategic Assessment (Review) undertaken in the frameworks of UNEP/MAP and GEF.
2. It should provide the proper “canvas” for the harmonious integration and/or smooth development of existing and future initiatives. Special provisions should be included for complementary elements of soft, cost-effective activities which could add value, enhance, promote and expand successful or promising cases. This implies the possibility to run relatively small projects as well.
3. Particular attention should be paid to the strengthening of institutions and capacity building, starting from the Education for Environment and Sustainability (EfES) and Public Awareness, to training on eco efficiency and even research, as well as enhancement of participatory processes on concrete main areas of concern (e.g. on water, biodiversity, etc.).
4. A clear Political mandate should be secured to integrate and apply social, economic and environmental targets and indicators in the execution of all programmes enlisted under this strategy.
5. Particular effort should be invested in order to create the proper framework to bring together and secure synergy of all the so-called sectoral integration strategies linked with the environment such as Integrated Water Resources Management, Integrated River Basin Management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, etc. as well as the Regional Sustainability Strategies and Local Agendas 21.
6. Monitoring and auditing provisions should be built in. Here the EEA could also play a role.

7. Within the Commission clear allocation of responsibilities is necessary, in parallel with allocation of the appropriate time, financial and human resources.
8. To ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the process there is an urgent need for integration of individual sectoral strategies of the EU (on Agriculture, Fisheries, Transport, Energy, Tourism, etc.) and those of the Euro-Med countries. In fact, the most difficult task is to bridge harmoniously the critical and most successful, usually national and local “bottom-up” approaches, to the necessary regional or global “top-down” processes and simultaneously empower the civil society, NGOs and citizens to undertake their responsibilities and participate actively, enhancing vertical integration.
9. The entire EuroMed region needs to set its own environmental targets for all major global problems such as the greenhouse gases emissions, biodiversity, management of water resources in rural and urban areas, desertification, etc (these issues have been elaborated in more detail in the WWF paper tabled in this meeting).
10. Since poverty and the widening gap in economic development and distribution of wealth between countries and subregions followed by massive migration and unemployment are the root causes of many of the environmental degradation and development problems, particular attention should be paid to these issues in the Strategy and the necessary adjustments in the operational, financial and institutional provisions should be made.

From what I have heard this morning I am afraid that the new EuroMed SDS has not yet secured the adequate prerequisites and provisions to fulfill most of the aforementioned criteria. It has to be decided if you are talking about Strategic Guidelines for a next SMAP phase or an overall and all embracing EUROMED Sustainable Development Strategy.

If the conditions are not ripe and the time does not allow it, it is not impossible to link these two scopes and obtain some kind of gradual build-up of the Strategy. But this should be clear in order to design “how” to achieve this, through which channels and phases. MIO-ECSDE is, as usual, keen to substantially contribute in this exercise in co-operation with all other interested actors.