

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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## PARTICIPATION BY THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

(Communication from the Commission to the Council)

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An intergovernmental meeting of the Mediterranean States will be held in Cannes from 2-7 March 1981 to review the state of affairs with regard to the Action Plan for the Mediterranean; a second meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean against Pollution (the Barcelona Convention) will also be held at the same time.

As these dates will affect the implementation of the Action Plan for the Mediterranean, it is appropriate to review the Community's participation in this Plan and contemplate the role which the Community should play hereunder in the next few years.

1. The Action Plan was adopted in Barcelona in February 1975 by an intergovernmental meeting of the countries bordering the Mediterranean, convened by the Director of the United Nations Programme on the Environment (UNEP).

There are three parts to the Plan:

a) The framework convention on the protection of the Mediterranean and the special protocols (Barcelona Convention)

- On 16 February 1976, in Barcelona, a conference of plenipotentiaries from the States bordering the Mediterranean adopted the first legal instruments forming the basis of international cooperation in the Mediterranean area. These instruments are as follows :

- the framework Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution

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- the first protocol on the prevention of the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by dumping from ships and aircraft
- the second protocol concerning cooperation in dealing with emergency cases of pollution of the Mediterranean by oil and other harmful substances
- the third protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution from land-based sources, signed in Athens on 17 May 1980.
- a draft fourth protocol concerning special protected areas of the Mediterranean was reviewed at an intergovernmental meeting in Athens from 13-17 October 1980.

By the Council Decision of 25 July 1977, the Community ratified the Convention and the dumping protocol on 16 March 1978. As regards the cooperation protocol, the Council recorded its agreement in principle to accession thereto at the Council of Environment Ministers on 10 December 1978. As one Member State was rather reluctant, however, it has not yet been possible to adopt the proposed accession decision.

The framework convention and the dumping and cooperation protocols came into force on 12 February 1978.

The procedure for ratifying the protocol on land-based pollution is under discussion at the Council.

b) The integrated planning of development and resource management in the Mediterranean basin

Two important initiatives have been taken in this context so far :

- The Blue Plan whose purpose is to make information available to the authorities and development planners in the Mediterranean countries to enable them to draw up national plans which will promote optimum socio-economic development and the improvement of the environment for present and future generations.

A coordination and analysis group manages the studies and research carried out under the first phase of the Plan.

Studies are carried out with regard to each of the following systems or sub-systems: land-sea, water resources, industrial growth, old and new forms of energy, health, population and population movements, land utilization, tourism, economic relations between Mediterranean

countries, transport and communications, the cultural heritage and the relations between the various cultures, environmental awareness and non-Mediterranean influences on the Mediterranean basin.

The Mediterranean environmental development activity centre in Cannes (MEDEAS) has been chosen as the regional activity centre for the Blue Plan.

- The Priority Action Programme (PAP)

whose purpose is to promote permanent cooperation between the Mediterranean states in local activities and projects. Several projects are being drawn up, covering :

- . renewable energy sources,
- . the biological resources of the sea (aquaculture),
- . human settlements,
- . the management of water resources,
- . soil protection,
- . tourism.

The regional activity centre for the Priority Action Programme is in Split.

c) The coordinated programme of continuous monitoring and research relating to pollution in the Mediterranean (Med. Pol.)

- Thirteen pilot projects have been agreed, covering the following four areas of research :

- . sources of pollution,
- . coastal waters,
- . the high seas,
- . the atmosphere.

In all, 83 laboratories in 17 countries are taking part in the programme covering the pollution of the Mediterranean (involving a total of 158 research contracts).

Further to the Council's Decision of 13 March 1980 to incorporate marine protection in the 1980-83 research programme of the Joint Research Centre at Ispra, the latter is preparing a special project

(Archimedes), which is designed to study the various types of pollution in certain zones of the Mediterranean and to further our understanding of the mechanisms of spreading of the most important kinds of pollutants.

2. All the states bordering the Mediterranean (Albania excepted) and the European Economic Community attended the Action Plan meetings. Apart from the Community itself, fifteen states have already ratified the Convention and at least one of the three protocols.

The Action Plan for the Mediterranean is a multilateral framework which offers many interesting opportunities for cooperation between the Mediterranean countries.

From the outset, the Community has taken part in constructing and developing this framework; in addition to its experience of these matters it has contributed financially, but only to a nominal extent which in no way matches the economic and political importance of cooperation with the Mediterranean countries, especially with the developing ones.

The budget for the Action Plan amounted to US \$ 6 400 000 for the period 1979-80. Twenty-five per cent of this was met by UNEP, which initiated the project. The UN itself provided another 25 % through its special agencies.

The remaining US \$ 3 200 000 were divided among the contracting parties : US \$ 1 570 000 (48.88%) was paid by France, US \$ 744 000 (23.27%) by Italy and US \$ 90 000 (2.94%) by Greece.

The Community's share amounted to US \$ 80 000, or 2.4% (i.e. approximately 30.000 ECUS a year).

From 1981, however, UNEP's share of an estimated budget of about US \$ 5 million will be reduced to roughly US \$ 300 000.

Although it was announced a long time ago, the reduction by UNEP of its financial commitment threatens to affect the Action Plan adversely just when the various programmes are becoming operational. It would be politically regrettable if cooperation, which has hitherto been an undeniable success, should be impeded by financial problems.

Accordingly, we should ask ourselves whether the Community cannot seize the opportunity afforded by the reduction of the UNEP commitment and play a more sizeable role in a sensitive area in respect of both political and environmental matters by partly taking over from UNEP where finance and technology are concerned.

3. It is in the Community's interest to show that it is mindful of the problems of the Mediterranean.

For one thing, when Greece joins, its Mediterranean shores represent about 22 000 km, out of a total Community coastline of 41 000 km. With the accession of Spain, the Mediterranean portion of total coast-length will be greater still.

In addition, the acquisition by some southern Mediterranean countries of oil and gas resources increases the importance of the Mediterranean area for the Community.

The Community maintains good relations with almost all the Mediterranean countries with which it is associated by bilateral agreements, including those which include cooperation in environmental matters.

Greater commitment by the Community under the Action Plan for the Mediterranean would be welcomed by the countries concerned and could have a positive effect on all its relations with the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

An increased financial contribution from the Community, which would still be very small in any case, would also emphasize the interest of the non-Mediterranean Member States in preserving the Mediterranean, a sea which for political, economic, cultural and touristic reasons is part of the heritage of Europe as a whole.

The Community could thus play a more active role within the Mediterranean, without, however, its financial contribution added to that of Community members directly involved (France: 48,83 %, Italy: 23,27 %) being perceived by other mediterranean countries as being inappropriately large.

4. There is more at stake, moreover, in the Mediterranean than just ecological matters. Starting from the very real need to control pollution and preserve the Mediterranean, and despite existing tensions, relatively close cooperation is emerging in this region between

countries with different political structures and economic situations. One has only to remember that, at these meetings, Israel sits at the same table as all the Arab countries.

Environmental developments in the Mediterranean have not escaped the attention of the Soviet Union which has tried on several occasions, unsuccessfully, to secure observer status at Action Plan meetings.

The environment aspect of the Mediterranean is also treated in various chapters of the Final Act of Helsinki, and will be discussed at the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

5. The meeting at Cannes from 2 to 7 March 1981, will review the implementation of the Action Plan and examine the draft budget for 1981.

It is appropriate that the Commission officials representing the Community at this meeting should have guidelines before them which will enable them to take an active part.

Therefore the Commission considers it essential that the Community should commit itself from now on to making a contribution to the fulfilment of the objectives in the Action Plan which is adequate from the scientific, structural and financial points of view and reflects its interests in the Mediterranean region.

- On the scientific level, the Commission intends to contribute to the research and continuous monitoring programme (Med. Pol.) set up under the Barcelona Convention, through the active participation of the Joint Research Centre. This will be particularly useful with regard to remote sensing.
- Structurally, the Commission intends to promote and intensify cooperation between its departments and the Action Plan Secretariat. The research and continuous monitoring programme (Med. Pol.) and the projects being finalized under the Priority Action Programme (PAP) cover such sectors as research, energy and the biological resources of the sea, and the competent departments of the Commission would usefully cooperate here.

Several of these projects, moreover, are set in countries - both in the northern and southern Mediterranean - with which cooperation agreements exist and which could benefit from the cooperation of the services of the Commission. As practised at the moment, these forms of cooperation are pragmatic of course; nevertheless, we should emphasize that they would be well suited to the Action Plan for the Mediterranean.

Financially, as already noted, there are good arguments for the Community to increase its contribution to the Action Plan's budget, with a view to filling some of the gap created by the virtually complete withdrawal of UNEP. It is accordingly proposed, subject to availability of funds, and to the Commission's priorities as determined at the time of drawing up the preliminary draft budget, that as from 1982 a significant increase be contemplated in the annual fixed sum contributed by the Community to the Action Plan budget (assessed by Mr. Narjes at an order of magnitude of 500,000 EUA). The amount of the grant and the appropriate budget heading would be finally fixed through the budgetary procedure.