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# **EMWIS : Vector for Cooperation in the Mediterranean**

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Information and documentation systems -

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Operational since the end of 1999, the Euro-Mediterranean Information System on know-how in the Water Sector - EMWIS - is an essential tool for dialogue and institutional exchange between the concerned Countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

It fits in with the decisions made by the Ministers at the Conferences of Marseilles (1996) and Turin (1999) on local water management.

The significance of the completed work was underlined by the Partnership Countries, which also reaffirmed their will to continue cooperating on the bases already defined during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Athens in November 2006.

### **Preparation of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water in 2008**

The Partner Countries and the European Commission agreed that convening a ministerial conference was necessary under the European Union French Presidency at the end of 2008, to start again regional cooperation in the water sector. EMWIS is preparing a contribution to this conference in the form of an assessment of and prospects for cooperation in the Mediterranean water sector for better coordinating all the initiatives for real effectiveness.

### **Synthesis and transfer of knowledge**

Three topics are being developed by working groups initiated with the Water Framework Directive and Med-EUWI Joint Process (Mediterranean component of the European Water Initiative):

- - Wastewater reuse,
- - Drought and water scarcity,
- - Monitoring networks.

The first results of this work were presented to the Euro-Med Water Directors during their meeting on 10 and 11 December 2007 in Bled (Slovenia).

### **National Water Information Systems**

At the end of 2007, EMWIS had 16 national websites with the launching of the Egyptian site that year. The National Focal Points (NFPs) do not spare their efforts to revise their site and produce contents useful for the national stakeholders of the water sector. The know-how acquired by Algeria, Spain and France in the technical and organizational implementation of their National Water Information Systems enables to facilitate the actions of the other countries.

### **A Web portal in full expansion**

Nearly one year after its launching, the new international portal of EMWIS receives about 50,000 monthly visits on the average: about 1,000 newsletters and more than 500 events were published in 2007.

Its thesaurus on water is now available in 5 languages (Arabic, English, Spanish, French and Italian).

The electronic flash (e-flash) is sent every month to more than 14,000 readers in Arabic, English and French. It not only allows incorporating the information provided by the NFPs and various topical websites, but also providing flows of information in real time for other websites (e.g. Alliance for water monitoring). It is a reference media for water information in the Euro-Mediterranean area and a collaborative working tool for the working groups of the WFD/Med-EUWI Joint Process.

Thanks to a toolbox based on free software, which enables to generate very powerful Web portals in a simple way, Jordan launched its new bilingual (English-Arabic) EMWIS portal in May 2007, in cooperation with the main national stakeholders.

Photo: Regional seminar on the water information systems and signing of a 20 M&euro; convention between the Algerian Ministry of Water Resource and the European Commission