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MCSD : Promoting demand management policies

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In November 2001, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) was entrusted with the drafting of a strategy, which focused on four topics :

- 1- Promoting economic development by developing Mediterranean assets ;
- 2- Reducing social disparities by achieving the Millennium Development Goals and strengthening cultural identities ;
- 3- Changing the methods of non-sustainable production and consumption and ensuring sustainable management of natural resources ;
- 4- Improving governance on local, national and regional scales.

The MCSD selected a series of indicators for evaluation and follow-up, using this approach.

With regard to water demand management, these indicators aim at establishing a characterization, at following up the progress made and the effectiveness of the water management policies.

Written by IOWater, upon request from the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, the French report summarizes all the indicators and results obtained in the French Mediterranean area.

In France, the progressive implementation of integrated river basin management since 1964 saw the gradual emergence of management methods which, de facto, tended towards better demand management, the conservation of aquatic ecosystems, including under condition of water stress.

The recent droughts, climate change and the economic approach, linked to the Framework Directive implementation, among others, resulted in introducing new management principles into the new Water Law of 2006, which aims at better managing demand for the various uses, including drinking water supply and agriculture but also the needs of ecosystems.

It remains that the elements of analysis and future prospects for 2015/2020 are still badly understood and deserve more thorough investigations. Although it is clear that the requirements for drinking water are increasing, because of demographic growth (20%), and that agricultural demand could decrease, more proactive policies, aiming at decreasing water consumption, are still to promote.

Tomorrow, the demand management policy will require a bigger integration of all aspects of public policies, going further than "a world of day-to-day actions", with the definition of shared objectives accepted by all the stakeholders, including those of the civil society, correctly informed of the consequences of their actions.