



medwaves e-newsletter

April 2008

A monthly e-newsletter by UNEP/MAP

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List of Natura 2000 protected sites updated

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UNEP APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION FOR COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION



Mr. Satinder Bindra (India/Canada) was appointed as the new Director of the Division for Communication and Public Information at UNEP, Nairobi. Bindra has had a distinguished career in the field of media and communication, including the electronic and print media. Until recently, he was the CNN

Bureau Chief for South Asia and Senior International Correspondent based in New Delhi, India. One of his main assignments included the 2004/2005 Tsunami disaster, for which he and his team received the *DuPont Award*. Mr. Bindra also drew to world attention a number of other environmental issues and stories during his more than seven years with CNN - ranging from melting glaciers to rain-water harvesting.

Mr. Bindra will formally join UNEP by the end of May 2008.

MAP COMPONENTS and BARCELONA CONVENTION

GREEK STUDENT WINS UNEP EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR GLOBAL PAINTING COMPETITION



A Greek student from Lesbos is the 2008 winner of the seventeenth International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment organized by UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme.

The 13 years old winner Evdokia Vallis received the 1000US\$ Prize from Greek Deputy Minister of Environment Physical Planning and Public Works Stavros Kaloyannis and UNEP/MAP Coordinator Paul Mifsud during the event "Facing a new scenario in the Mediterranean", organized in Athens on 16th April.

This annual competition is jointly organized by

the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Japan-based Foundation for Global Peace and Environment (FGPE), Bayer and Nikon. The painting



competition has been held since 1990 and in that time has received over 200,000 entries from children in over 100 countries.

This year's competition theme was Climate Change: Actions you can take now. Children aged 6 to 14 were invited to express through painting actions they can take to reduce the impact of climate change such as



using renewable energy, introducing energy saving light bulbs at home, sharing vehicles and using public transport, planting trees etc.

The global winners from all regions of the world will be announced on 5 June 2008 at the main international celebrations to mark World Environment Day in Wellington, New Zealand.

A selection of winning paintings will be shown in exhibitions in Wellington. They will also be exhibited on the Internet and used for posters, postcards, calendars and in publications by UNEP, the Foundation for Global Peace and Environment, Bayer and Nikon. Eventually all paintings submitted to the global competition will be stored at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan.

The International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment is part of UNEP's TUNZA strategy for children and youth. TUNZA is a word in Kiswahili that means to "treat with care". The programme aims to provide young people with information and tools on how to "treat Mother Earth with care" and how to act for a better world.

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN : EIB AND COMMISSION PRESENT PROJECTS FOR MEDITERRANEAN UNION



French plan to forge closer political ties with Europe's North African and Middle East neighbors on the Mediterranean Sea was

announced in March in Brussels, at the end of the first day of a two-day EU summit, but the specific details of the plan will still have to be worked out and launched at the summit of the Union for the Mediterranean (UM), to be held in Paris on 13 July, which would make it the highlight of France's turn at the helm of the six-month, rotating EU presidency, officials said.

The project would involve 39 partners -- the 27-nation EU plus a dozen on the Mediterranean's southern shores, from Mauritania to Algeria, Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority to Syria and Turkey.

The plan outlines the creation of a joint presidency, with one EU member and one non-EU member state assisted by a permanent staff of 20 bureaucrats.

Addressing the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea is likely to become one of the key objectives to be announced during the launch summit of the Union for the Mediterranean (UM), to be held in Paris on 13 July. On 10 April, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) presented a series of

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44 concrete projects to fight the sea's pollution by 2020 that could be endorsed by the Union Mediterraneanne (UM).

Over the last 30 years MAP, through its MEDPOL de-pollution Programme, has contributed a great deal towards pollution reduction in the Mediterranean. MEDPOL has reviewed and analysed data and information describing the sources and quantities of pollutants discharged into the Mediterranean Sea and the actions needed to reduce and eliminate this pollution.

Currently, France is working to identify projects to give substance to President Nicolas Sarkozy's initiative.

The EIB and the Commission are now seizing the political opportunity of the UM initiative that was endorsed by the spring European Council to raise funds and turn the plans into reality.

While Paris is keen on stressing the novelty of the UM, it is actually looking to revive some projects that were launched previously within the framework of the Euro-Med partnership.

The implementation cost of the 44 projects is estimated at €2.1 billion by the EIB, which stresses that financing them only through loans would prove very costly for southern governments.

DISPOSAL OF GARBAGE INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN FROM SHIPS IS PROHIBITED FROM 1ST MAY 2009



The Marine Environment Protection (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) at its 57th Session (31st March – 4th April 2008), has adopted an MEPC resolution establishing the date on which the MARPOL Annex V (Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships) special area regulations

shall take effect in the Mediterranean Sea.

REMPEC's initiative on garbage discharge requirements brings into effect MARPOL Annex V special area status for the Mediterranean

MEPC decided that the discharge requirements for special areas of MARPOL Annex V shall take effect, for

the Mediterranean Sea, on 1st May 2009. Consequently, for all ships, as from 1st May 2009, disposal into the Mediterranean Sea of the following is prohibited: all plastics, including but not limited to synthetic ropes, synthetic fishing nets and plastic garbage bags; and all other garbage, including paper products, rags, glass metal, bottles, crockery, dunnage, lining and packing materials.

The adoption of the resolution follows the notification at the same MEPC session by Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey, representing States bordering the Mediterranean Sea special area, that adequate reception facilities for garbage are provided in all the relevant ports within the region.

In the run-up to the 8th Meeting of REMPEC Focal agreed that the Mediterranean coastal States Parties to the MARPOL Annex V present a joint submission to the IMO's MEPC, notifying that adequate reception facilities for garbage were provided in their respective ports.

The Meeting also accepted the proposal of Cyprus to present the relative joint submission to MEPC, and agreed to entrust REMPEC to co-ordinate this initiative at regional level. Subsequently, the Centre prepared and co-ordinated the co-sponsorship of the relative document which was submitted to the last session of MEPC by Cyprus on behalf of Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria and Tunisia.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UNEP/MAP – WORLD BANK

\$250 MILLION TO DEPOLLUTE THE MEDITERRANEAN

A Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem between the Mediterranean Action Plan of UNEP (UNEP/MAP) and the World Bank for the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, has been endorsed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Over \$250 million will be leveraged under the Strategic Partnership, over a five-year period, for reforms and investments for reducing pollution and reversing the degradation of the Mediterranean.

A grant of \$90 million has already been approved by GEF for the Strategic Partnership that consists of a Regional Component that will be executed by UNEP/MAP and an Investment Fund led by the World Bank.

The countries eligible for funding under the Partnership include Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The Palestinian Authority also participates.

The main objective is to assist these countries in implementing reforms, agreed interventions and investments for pollution reduction, the safeguarding of biodiversity and to stop habitat degradation as outlined in the two Strategic Action Plans (SAPs), one for pollution reduction (SAP/MED) and the other for biodiversity conservation (SAP/BIO) prepared by UNEP/MAP.

The Strategic Partnership will be implemented in synergy with the European Investment Bank's Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP) and Horizon 2020 initiative which are part of the European Union's cooperation with the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. All these initiatives are intended to tackle the major sources of pollution identified in the National Action Plans (NAPs) prepared by UNEP/MAP with the participating countries.

After adopting a long-term Strategic Action Programme (SAP) with precise pollution reduction targets, countries have identified pollution hot spots and have formally adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) that describe in detail what pollution reduction interventions/projects they intend to implement to fulfil the reduction targets of the SAP.



ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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Scheme to save water is unveiled

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BIODIVERSITY: HUMAN ACTIVITY SERIOUS THREAT TO MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Out of the 25,000 known Mediterranean plant species (9.2% of the world's identified species on a territory representing just 1.5% of the planet's surface), half are particularly well adapted notably to dry periods and are not found anywhere else in the world (endemic species). However, the European statistical office, Eurostat, reveals that the biodiversity of the Mediterranean – one of "Earth's 25 hotspots" – is particularly threatened by human activity.



The functioning of a once intact natural system has been disrupted, reducing, for example, water and air quality and increasing the incidence of forest fires. Urban development, industrialisation and tourism increase fragmentation of natural zones and put intolerable pressure on biodiversity.

Furthermore, the introduction of invasive species and the overexploitation of natural resources are among the most serious problems. Moreover, the overexploitation as observed, for example, in certain types of aquaculture adds to factors affecting the environment.

The 2006 edition of the 'Red list' compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) totals 16,119 species threatened with extinction in the world, which is 1% of known species, including 12% of birds, 23% of mammals and 32% of amphibians. In the nine Mediterranean partner countries (2), percentages are higher still, with averages of 14% for birds, 39% for mammals and 49% for amphibians, which illustrates,

believe European experts, the spread of the threat weighing on the Mediterranean region.

The protection of biodiversity therefore comes fully into play in this region and in order to do so, the creation of protected zones constitutes one of the main conservation measures. Some 4,400 protected zones were designated in the whole Mediterranean basin, covering 96 million hectares (7% of the global total). The development of the surfaces accumulated in the nine countries reveals a positive trend, the figure of 2.52% which was recorded there remains low in comparison to the 10% target announced by the World Park Congress (1992) and in comparison with the 12% protected surface area in the European part of the Mediterranean (IUCN, 2007).

SCHEME TO SAVE WATER IS UNVEILED



Greek Minister of the Environment, Planning, and Public Works Giorgos Souflias presented a national plan to manage Greece's water resources so that no island or area of the mainland will be left without access to water in the future.

The plan contains several controversial elements, including the completion of a water diversion from the Akheloos River to the Thessaly Plains that has already been blocked five times by the Council of State, Greece's top legal body. It also proposes the construction of at least 20 hydroelectric dams.

Souflias said that Greece must learn to live with these types of projects because of dwindling supplies of water and large demands in some regions versus large supplies and lower demands in others.

In the meanwhile, ongoing drought with cuts and rationing of the water supply have been afflicting Cyprus in these first half of 2008.

Cyprus is urgently struggling to come up with an urgent course of action to answer the desperate need for new water supplies.

For the moment, Cyprus is set to receive shipped water from Greece, but alternatives are being explored to secure water reserves in the coming years.

EU INITIATIVES ON TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Dr. Joe Borg, Member of the European Commission responsible for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, tackled the issue of EU initiatives on tourism in the Mediterranean region at the Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on Tourism (Fez, Morocco, 3 April). In many Southern Partner Economies, tourism represents quite a significant share of GDP (9.5% in Morocco, 8.8% in Turkey, 8.5% in Egypt, 6.3% in Jordan, 5% in Tunisia).



Among the reasons for the Mediterranean being a successful destination, there are the proactive policies towards the promotion of tourism launched by the governments in the region. Tourism is today critical for employment and for economic activity in many countries in the region.

Although large differences exist between countries and in spite of some setbacks in the aftermath of September 11 the average growth rate of tourism in the region has been 12.2% between 2001 and 2006, with tourist expenditure increasing even faster.

These growth rates are more than double the world average and the growth potential is still large and promising.

Following a proposal from the Commission, the EU has launched an Integrated Maritime Policy aimed at developing all sea-related activities, including coastal and maritime tourism, in a sustainable manner. Last October, the Commission also approved an "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism", setting out a medium to long term Agenda under which

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all tourism stakeholders should undertake the necessary steps to strengthen the contribution of sustainable practices to facilitate competitiveness.

On the basis of this policy framework the Commission facilitates the exchange of best practice and stands ready to examine ways in which interested EUROMED partners could get involved into on-going or future projects.

LIST OF NATURA 2000 PROTECTED SITES UPDATED

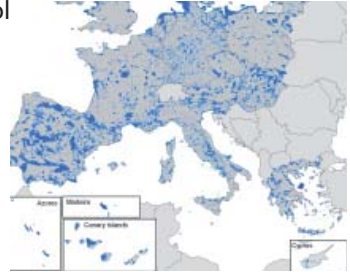


With the adoption on 28 March of the updated list of Natura 2000 protected areas in the Mediterranean region, a total of 18,784 square kilometres (489 new sites) have been added to the European network of protected sites since 1 January. Natura 2000 now covers nearly 20% of the continent's landmass and 100,000 km2 of its seas.

Ten countries in all - Austria, Cyprus, Spain, Finland, France, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden - have added new sites since the start of this year to their lists of 'Sites of Community Importance'.

Among the Mediterranean countries, Cyprus has added 36 sites, including the Larnaka salt lakes, where large numbers of flamingos winter. The 32 new sites in France include the Grotte de la source du Jaur, a cave system that is home to large numbers of Schreibers' long-fingered bats (*Miniopterus schreibersi*). Malta has added 27 sites to its list, which now includes Rđumijiet ta Malta, the coastal cliffs home to seabirds such as the Yelkousan shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*). Slovenia has added almost 750 km2 in the Julian Alps, home to brown bears, the symbol of European fauna.

Spain has added three new sites in the Canary Islands, including the underwater seagrass meadows of Sebadales de Güigüí.



SPAIN GETS NEW ENVIRONMENT MINISTER



Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has replaced Spanish environment minister Cristina Narbona as part of a reshuffle following confirmation of his own re-election as Spanish prime minister last Friday.

Mrs Narbona has been replaced by agriculture minister Elena Espinosa, who heads a new ministry combining environment and rural and marine resources.

Over the last four years Narbona and Espinosa have clashed repeatedly over whether farmers, which consume up to four-fifths of Spain's water, should be required to pay higher water prices to reflect infrastructure costs.

Narbona's public commitment to a "new water culture" favouring demand management and desalination over traditional supply-side solutions attracted criticism from farmers and some regional governments.

Meanwhile Mr Zapatero gave assurances that Spain would continue its tough action on climate change. In a speech to the parliament he promised incentives for emissions reduction in the private sector, increased investment in carbon capture technology and new legislation to promote energy efficiency and renewables.

Spain is one of UNEP/MAP Contracting Parties, and the depository of the Barcelona Convention.



UNEP/MAP Key 2008 Dates

19-21 May SMAP III Regional Workshop on ICZM Policy Alghero, Italy

29-30 May Second Executive Coordination Panel meeting Malta

19-20 June MCSD Steering Committee Meeting Athens

3-4 July First Meeting of Compliance Committee Athens

9-10 July Second Meeting of Government designated experts on the ecosystem approach Athens