Since its launch, Horizon 2020 has been a joint venture of the EU and our Mediterranean partners. As the initiative has developed, so has the spirit of trust and goodwill on which fruitful cooperation heavily relies. It is our shared achievement that Horizon 2020 is now producing its first concrete results. While the road ahead is long, the Commission has the greatest confidence in the Horizon 2020 initiative.

Stavros Dimas
European Commissioner for Environment
July 2008
Many roads – one destination!

Horizon 2020 relies on cooperation between partners to increase the effectiveness of individual efforts. Many examples of this cooperation are now beginning to emerge.

A pipeline of projects reducing pollution: The Cairo roadmap called for the development of a pipeline of pollution reduction projects that are both environmentally significant for the region and financially viable for a lending institution. The identification of such priority hotspots investments was conducted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) in cooperation with the United Nation’s Environment Programme’s Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). It developed into the Mediterranean Hot-Spot Identification Programme (MeHSIP), under which a list of projects is now being finalised, based on the 44 projects already identified in seven Mediterranean countries. The purpose of MeHSIP is to speed up potential loan commitments by the EIB and other financial institutions. The EIB is now working with other key donors such as the World Bank, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the German development bank KfW to ensure that the implementation of the first identified projects soon starts.

Monitoring: Environment leaders involved in the Cairo road-map recognised the need to pull together the various existing sources of data and information systems in a coherent way through what is known as a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). Working with the MAP and its various Regional Activity Centres as well as other key organisations, the European Environment Agency (EEA), is now developing such an information system, with a scorecard and indicator process. They presented their first proposals to Horizon 2020 partners in Tunis in 2008.

Learning from experience

The EU has extensive knowledge and experience in dealing with the issues addressed by Horizon 2020 and the Commission is helping partners to learn from this experience using the tools at our disposal. In November 2007, in Marseilles, a seminar on municipal waste gave staff from local municipalities practical examples of how collection schemes were overcoming the problems they themselves face on a day-to-day basis. It also drew on the results from Commission-financed LIFE and research projects. As a follow-up, participants are helping the Commission to define needs at working level in the waste sector, to better guide the programming of future assistance.

In June 2008, as part of the Cairo road-map, the Commission and the MAP Clean Production Regional Activity Centre organised a conference on applying an integrated pollution prevention and control approach to industry in Mediterranean countries.

These two examples show how the EU is sharing its experience and helping to build administrative capacity in partner countries.

A new opportunity

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Barcelona on 27–28 November 1995, marked the starting point of the Barcelona Process, a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of political, economic and social relations between the Member States of the European Union and their partners of the Southern Mediterranean. It counts 39 members, 27 EU Member States and 12 Mediterranean Partners (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). Libya has observer status since 1999. A new impetus may be given to the Barcelona Process by its new component: the Union for the Mediterranean. The Commission has been exchanging views and ideas with all its partners in order to shape this Union. It offers an opportunity to put Mediterranean issues high on the political agenda and recently outlined proposals (1) list fighting Mediterranean pollution as its key priorities.

---