

Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research & Innovation Gateway

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The Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research and Innovation Gateway (MED-SPRING) is a Coordination Action financed by the INCO-Net instrument under the FP7 - Capacities Programme. The aim of the Project is to contribute to the quality of the Euro-Mediterranean research area, with a particular focus on the bi-regional Euro-Mediterranean S&T cooperation, research and innovation, policy dialogue and cooperation monitoring.

Welcome to the 2nd MED-SPRING E-Newsletter!

Dear readers, welcome to the second issue of the MED-SPRING E-Newsletter, which has the purpose of informing on and involving researchers, students, active citizens, policy makers and governmental officers in a renewed strategy for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, with a particular focus on the Euro-Mediterranean Science & Technology cooperation.

What has the MEDSPRING project done in the first nine months?

by CLAUDIO BOGLIOTTI, MEDSPRING PROJECT COORDINATOR

Most of the MEDSPRING work packages and project tasks are fully operative, with the overall objective to strengthen the cooperation on research and innovation in the the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Regarding the analysis of societal challenges to reinforce the frame of cooperation (WP2), more than 50 experts from MS/AC and MPCs participated in the **1st EMEG (Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group) meeting**, held in Lisbon from 20 to 21 June 2013 and organized by FCT (Portugal). The meeting focused on identifying topics, solutions and opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean research cooperation in the following **societal challenges**: resource efficiency (water), high quality affordable food and renewable energy. The main goal was to identify research topics leading to results, solutions and market opportunities to enhance sustainable development and create opportunities for new jobs in the Mediterranean region, in relation to the above societal challenges. EMEG experts work was substantiated by the inputs of the successful **open consultation**, launched in April 2013 and collecting more than 100 questionnaire from the civil society (researchers, SMEs, NGOs, citizens and so on) and WEB communities. The Lisbon meeting was video-streamed through the Agora MedSpring WEB in order to allow the civil society to give feedbacks and comments on real time.

In the framework of WP4, the open dialogue between EMEG experts and the web-Community is still continuing through the on-line **open discussion on the position paper**, available on-line at <http://agora.medspring.eu/en/content/emeg-position-paper>. The meeting delivered recommendations for the Euro-Mediterranean agenda, particularly to research policy makers of Members States, Mediterranean Partner Countries as well as European institutions and programmes (particularly the upcoming EU Research Programme "Horizon 2020").

Concerning the Euro Mediterranean Agora, *the web community is still growing* and the project is managing a social hub through three popular social networks (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn), with rising interest from the Mediterranean civil society. In the framework of WP6, an Euro-Mediterranean Inter-institutional and Training-awareness Meeting has been organized in Beirut (Lebanon), on 11-12 July 2013. The meeting organized by CNRS (Lebanon) aimed at providing a deeper insight of EU tools for long-term Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, for example Article 185 and an overview of some ongoing initiatives under this Article.

On this occasion, H.E. Hassan Diab, Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education made a welcome speech to the participants, stressing the importance of cooperation on research and development between North and South of the Mediterranean. The second day has been devoted to group discussion on possible thematic orientations which could be addressed by such a cooperation in the Mediterranean. In particular, participants discussed the possibility of launching an Article 185 initiative addressed to the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Regarding the capacity building in research, development and innovation (WP7), in order to design an effective training to exploit the results of research activities, *UNIMED launched a survey across the training needs of researchers in public and private institutions*, in order to investigate which factors are relevant for the Mediterranean research community and to jointly design an effective capacity building path. It probes into three areas: research management competences, technical and scientific competences, market and entrepreneurship competences and needs. The survey is available on line at <http://bit.ly/medspring>.

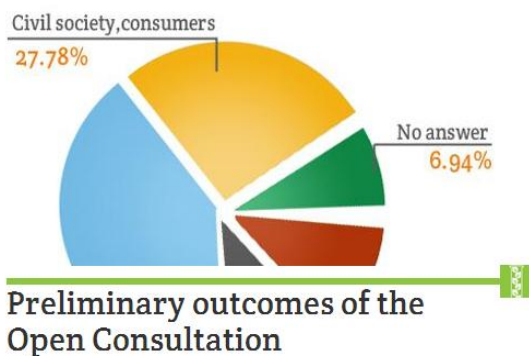
The project challenges are increasing and commitments are intensifying, but the MED-SPRING project team with the support of the whole Consortium is continuing its journey, with dedication and enthusiasm.

Our main past activities

• MEDSPRING Open Consultation

The MED-SPRING project launched an open consultation to collect comments and opinions coming from a broader public of active citizens, researchers, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, members of civil society on the societal challenges of food security, water scarcity and energy in the Mediterranean region.

This open consultation will help to better assess and orient actions to be taken and to frame and orient the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. Some of the comments are summarized in an infographic prepared by AGORA MED-SPRING.



• The first EMEG meeting

The first EMEG meeting, held in Lisbon last June, conveyed 50 experts from Europe and South Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey) to discuss ways and means to increase uptake of research results and enhance a positive socio-economic impact on the civil society with regard to important challenges like water resources, food quality and security, energy.



The meeting was an opportunity for an open dialogue between EMEG experts and the web-Community through a special public session. They delivered recommendations for the Euro-Mediterranean agenda, particularly

to research policy makers of Member States, Mediterranean Partner Countries as well as European institutions and programmes (particularly the upcoming EU Research Programme "Horizon 2020"). EMEG contributed in Lisbon to take stock of and systematize inputs coming from an open public consultation, launched by the MED-SPRING project Agora in May on "Research results valorization".

- **Express your opinion**

On the ground of the results obtained through the Open Consultation and of the discussion held during the Meeting in Lisbon, the EMEG group has produced a position paper which presents the recommendations for the Euro-Mediterranean research agenda. You can find it at: <http://agora.medspring.eu/en/content/emeg-position-paper>.

- **Euro-Mediterranean Inter-Institutional and training-awareness meeting**

From 11th to 12th July, 2013 the workshop "Inter-institutional Capacity Building & Awareness Workshop", organized by MED-SPRING in Beirut, conveyed senior officials and researchers of key organizations and main actors from Europe and South Mediterranean Countries to discuss prospects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on Science and Technology under a form of a more stable and sustainable cooperation. The event was focused on the instruments for building a long-term and stable cooperation on research and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Participants discussed the main tools to promote and strengthen the cooperation and the research priorities and themes that should be addressed, in line with the principles of co-ownership and co-funding.



H.E. Hassan Diab, Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education, together with participants came from 11 countries and represent institutions, research centers and universities and the private sector, attended the workshop. Ad-hoc sessions were organized to build a shared North-South knowledge, capacity and willingness to develop a common form of long term cooperation.

- **Designing an effective training**

MED-SPRING invites you to submit your opinions and views on the role and impact of the research activities in the Euro-Mediterranean countries, regarding the three main societal challenges: Resource Efficiency, High Quality Affordable Food and Energy. Its purpose is to investigate which factors are relevant for the research community and to jointly design an effective capacity building path. It probes into 3 areas: research management competences, technical and scientific competences, market and entrepreneurship competences and needs. Please take the Survey to contribute with your views, as this will be open until September 20th, 2013.

Also in the pipeline!

- **News on Horizon 2020**

Visit our new Horizon 2020 page inside the MED-SPRING website to be aware of any news on the new Framework Programme.

- **New Horizons, New Challenges: Evaluation of STI**

On 14th and 15th November 2013 the international evaluation conference "New Horizons / New Challenges: evaluation of STI policies, instruments and organisations" is organised in Vienna, Austria. It provides an open forum for evaluators, scientists, research managers, authorities and STI policy makers to debate challenging developments in STI policy and their effects on evaluation theory and practice.

- **Best Practices in Innovation Management for Sustainable Growth**

The next session of the INSMEAcademy on "Best Practices in Innovation Management for Sustainable Growth" will take place on the 24th of September from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Italian Time (CET) and will be held by Ms. Eva Diedrichs, Project leader of IMProve and Senior Manager at A.T. Kearney.

- **Stakes and perspectives of transmediterranean scientific research**

From 19th to 20th September 2013 at Agropolis International, Montpellier, the French National Research Agency (ANR) and Agropolis international within the framework of TRANSMED programme organize the seminar "Stakes and perspectives of transmediterranean scientific research".

Our main future activities

- ***MED-SPRING project invited to participate in TRANSMED***

The MED-SPRING project has been invited to participate in TRANSMED, organized by ANR (France), from September 19th to 20th, 2013 in Montpellier, France.

- ***MED-SPRING participation in the final workshop of EARN***

The MED-SPRING project has been invited to participate in the final workshop of EARN (Euro-Algerian research network) in Algiers, Algeria, from September 25th to 26th, 2013.

- ***MED-SPRING launch of a call for innovative ideas***

Launch of a call for innovative ideas! Best ideas will be selected and their author/s invited to the MED-SPRING regional brokerage event. The closure of the call will be by the end of November 2013.

- ***MED-SPRING project invited to ERANETMED Kick Off meeting***

The MED-SPRING project has been invited to participate in the Kick Off meeting of ERANETMED project, from November 4th to 5th, 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey.

- ***Deepening H2020 - Opportunities for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to enhance research networking and partnerships***

The MED-SPRING project is organizing this meeting for next January 2014 in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting will support networking among researchers, SMEs and research stakeholders from different South Mediterranean and European countries. During the meeting, participants will take stock of the opportunities offered by the European programmes, like for example Horizon 2020 for research and innovation and identify common research themes of interest to start cooperation.

The meeting will then create opportunities of brokerage among research actors of different countries with the aim of building competitive north-south research partnerships and projects to be financially supported by the most relevant programmes of the European Commission.

- ***MED-SPRING project regional brokerage event***

The MEDSPRING project is organizing a regional brokerage event in Cairo, Egypt, from 12th to 13th February 2014. Stay tuned for more information in the coming days!

- ***MED-SPRING project annual meeting***

MEDSPRING will organize its annual meeting in Cairo, Egypt, the next 14th February 2014. More information will be provided soon in the website.

- ***2nd EMEG meeting on research policies***

The MED-SPRING project will organize the "2nd EMEG meeting on research policies" in Tunisia during the next year, during late spring. More information will be provided as soon as possible in the project website.

Meet our Partners! Interviews to Ayman Rabi (water), Moez Jebara (food) and Josee Bonfim (energy) at the 1st EMEG meeting

The Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group meeting was held in Lisbon in June, 20th and 21st, 2013. The main aim of the meeting was to develop a common frame of topics - but not only - to be addressed for research valorization in Water, Food, and Energy. The meeting in Lisbon was the first step of EMEG contribution towards the identification of recommendations and suggestions to the European Commission for the development of the future research agenda for the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in research and innovation.

The meeting was organized in parallel workshops focused on Water, Food and Energy. Each workshop worked on the identification of topics, research results, and suggested actions on the ground of the results obtained through the Open Consultation. During the meeting we posed some questions to the group leaders in the three topics: Ayman Rabi (water), Moez Jebara (food) and Josee Bonfim (energy).

You can *find the interviews inside the MED-SPRING project Agora*: <http://agora.medspring.eu/en/content/emeg-meeting-interviews-group-leaders>

Why these societal challenges? Resource Efficiency, High Quality Affordable Food and Energy: The three Societal Challenges addressed by the MED-SPRING EMEG

Nowadays, the dimension of international cooperation could play an important role in achieving the Horizon 2020¹ main objectives. According to the new EU strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation², the identification of priority areas will be done within the most relevant societal challenges and applying the principles of co-ownership and co-funding. Therefore, an adequate valorization of research results in the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation on Research and Innovation, as well as a proper identification of the common problems, priorities and urgent actions to be carried out, is of utmost importance for achieving the Horizon 2020 objectives.

The MIRA project, predecessor of INCO.Net MED-SPRING, organized three Euro-Mediterranean Workshops in 2009 on Water, Food and Agriculture and Energy. Participants of these events - researchers and stakeholders from MPCs³, EU Member States and the European Commission - agreed on an important number of thematic priorities to be considered as of common EU-MPC interest, among which water scarcity management in agriculture, energy efficiency and wind energy, or coastal zone, freshwater ecosystems and natural hazards, received the attention of FP7 KBBE, ENERGY and ENV Work Programmes from 2010 to 2013. Nevertheless, other identified call-topics in areas for which there were a need of innovation (i.e. transferring knowledge to the productive system), such as renewable energy, water saving or agro-food, were not considered in the work Programmes. So building on efforts in these areas, niches for research valorisation and actions for innovation should be furthered.

In the case of Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation on Research and Innovation, the political statements delivered in recent crucial events and activities conveying a high critical mass of researchers and policy makers, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation (held in Barcelona in 2012), the MoCo recommendations and the MIRA project conclusions, highlight that main common priorities and specific topics for research are to be sought in the areas of water, food, energy, health and environment.

MED-SPRING aims at strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation on Research and Innovation in three identified thematic areas - Resource efficiency (particularly Water), High Quality Affordable Food and Energy, identified as Societal Challenges in Horizon 2020 - , contributing therefore to build a Euro-Mediterranean frame of common objectives and actions to be addressed. In concrete, the main issues to be focused, challenges to be addressed and expected results of these thematic areas are described, by the political statements above mentioned, as follows:

¹HORIZON 2020, the new coming Framework Programme, will run from 2014 to 2020 with a 80 billion euro budget and the objective of implementing the research and innovation component of the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative. Innovation Union is one of the Europe 2020 Strategy flagship initiatives, aimed at building Europe's global competitiveness and creating new growth and jobs in Europe. One of the principles of this Flagship Initiative consists on addressing major concerns such as climate change, developing sustainable transport and mobility, making renewable energy more affordable or ensuring food safety and security. For further information please visit http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm

²On 14 September 2012, the Commission adopted a Communication entitled "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach" (COM(2012) 497). The Communication sets out a new strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation, in particular with a view to implementing Horizon 2020.

³Mediterranean Partner Countries

Resource efficiency: Water is the main resource that calls for an efficient and sustainable management in the Mediterranean countries, particularly those countries being characterized by water scarcity or limited water availability.

- **Issues:** Developing capacities in risk management, planning and adaptation through good governance and engagement of stakeholders and civil society; ensure equity in water allocation, sustainable water management and institutional reinforcement; and the need to have holistic but competitive research and innovation in water quantity management and use efficiency, as well as management of non-conventional waters.
- **Challenges:** Ensuring water management for all ecosystem functions and food security, strengthening societal and water users empowerment, and building a regional co-ownership in water resource management.
- **Results:** Develop competitive research in water use efficiency, non-conventional waters, risk management, accounting the adoption of a common regional water strategy plan and increase of resources and efforts in addressing trans-basin cooperation and regional innovation.

High Quality Affordable Food: Food quality and security is at the base of the prosperous development and well-being of the Mediterranean region and it must be seen in a context of multiple dimensions and disciplines.

- **Issues:** Need of capturing all the innovative potential of the whole food sector and other agriculture and farm management research capacities as well as the innovative potential of SMEs, while maintaining and developing the agro-food and farming system to create transparent relationships between producers and consumers.
- **Challenges:** Sustainability in both the ecological and nutritional terms, reconciliation between modernity and tradition in a region with a strong food cultural identity, developing accessible and sustainable local markets before devoting efforts to the international global market, and ensuring coherence between sector food safety and health policies.
- **Results:** Adapt crop chains of Mediterranean products to the effects of climate variability, reducing post-harvest losses and contamination, access to nutritious and safe food, low environmental impact for the quality improvement of Mediterranean fruit and vegetable production, competitiveness of agricultural products from South Mediterranean Countries, and enhance innovation along the all food chain.

Energy: Renewable energy and energy efficiency are important for the sustainable development of the whole Mediterranean region.

- **Issues:** Unbalanced policy development between north and south Mediterranean countries; need to propel the transition to sustainable energy by deploying new technologies and create a sustainable Mediterranean energy market beside hydrocarbons; and need to create framework conditions in terms of human capital, policies, risk capital and financing to enable and foster energy R&I partnerships and joint ventures.
- **Challenges:** Developing innovative approaches most adapted to the Mediterranean socio-economic and political conditions, including integration of renewable energy to the electricity grids and needs of its countries (energy production, fresh and industrial water, economical and societal life, tourism); developing renewable energy and efficiency accounting the needs of industry and society, and preparing energy market evolution also based on renewable energy and in synergy with the Mediterranean Solar Plan; and developing strong research and innovation public-private partnership on renewable energy, attracting financing and investments.
- **Results:** High level Joint Technology and Innovation Programmes, business alliances, joint financing, professional capacities, establishing regular monitoring and evaluation, include a Mediterranean focus in EU energy policy and research programming.

Among others, an important MED-Spring component is EMEG (Euro-Mediterranean Expert Group), which acts as a "think tank" and is constituted of 45 experts, grouped in three sub-theme respectively with resource efficiency (water), high quality affordable food and energy. Experts are coming from EU Member States (MS), Associated Countries (AC) and Southern Mediterranean Countries, having different background and representing different stakes: research, innovation, policy, private sector, socio-economics, gender issue and others.

EMEG is expected to report on the valorization of "Research results" and provide recommendations for actions targeted to EU institutions and programmes (particularly, Horizon 2020), policy makers and relevant research actors from the civil society in Europe and South Mediterranean countries. EMEG met for the first time last June

2013 in Lisbon, where they discussed and produced a position paper⁴ which presents the recommendations for the Euro-Mediterranean research agenda. This document, available in the project AGORA website, is currently open to discussion⁵ in interaction with the website visitors.

Flash note on Food

Food quality and security is at the base of the prosperous development and well-being of the Mediterranean region and it must be seen in a context of multiple dimensions and disciplines. During its first meeting, EMEG identified research topics and niches that more than others would enhance market opportunities, having potential for new jobs, start-ups and winning public-private-societal partnerships in relation to the above societal challenges.

At this regard, the main focus on this Societal Challenge is to valorize and give impulse to the socio-economic development of rural areas, particularly those falling in the arid and semi-arid domain of the Mediterranean region. An increase of sustainable agriculture practices in these areas would decrease migration of local communities while preserving cultural heritage and local natural resources.

The following topics were found favorable for the uptake of research results and development of market opportunities in this area:

- Promoting sustainability in agriculture in the Mediterranean region taking into account traditional agriculture, innovative technologies, organic farming for the empowerment of rural communities.
- Policies and governance to integrate technologies with traditional food production systems, promoting food safety and security.
- Innovation in local Mediterranean food chains.

In order to ensure market opening, competitiveness and job opportunities, the following results and solutions were proposed in order to frame the research in above topics:

- Innovative precision agricultural technologies in all food value-chain and efficient resources management.
- Food-chain logistics reducing food lost and waste.
- Quality schemes certifications via participatory approach / group certification.
- Pre and post-harvest pathogens control.
- Local biodiversity to adapt to climate change and enhance competitive local traditional food and on-site awareness / training courses and schools.
- Long shelf life techniques.
- Bio-districts to boost rural economy for creating new jobs.

The above solutions are also the opportunity for the setup of public-private-societal partnerships involving, along the all research process cycle, the following actors:

- Farmers and food producers.
- Food and biotech industry / SMEs.
- Academia and research centers.
- Investors (i.e.: ethical groups of buyers).
- Policy makers and local authorities.
- Women associations

⁴Please click here to get the document <http://agora.medspring.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/emegpositionpaper.pdf>

⁵For further information please visit <http://agora.medspring.eu/en/content/emeg-position-paper>

Gender mainstreaming in water for agriculture, research needs and responses

by JUAN ANTONIO SAGARDOY, SENIOR GENDER AND WATER MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

For many people, gender mainstreaming in water is about solving problems linked to the image of a women carrying water in a jar on top of her head. Although this is a serious and real problem, it is certainly not the most common one in the Mediterranean Region. There are many other discrimination obstacles that women suffer in the context of agriculture water management that need attention from the research and development points of view.

During the last decades considerable efforts have been made in order to identify some of the inequity problems that affect women in agriculture water management and the related literature has produced many statements such as: women have less access to agriculture assets (land and water), inputs and services, they have less access to rural employment opportunities and reduce payments ; they operate smaller farms, have less livestock but more workload including fetching water and fuel-wood; they have less representation and responsibilities in the public administration of the water sector; there are more women than men among the rural poor population and others. In summary, the problems have been identified but what is less known is the magnitude or extend of these problems, their origin and the actions needed to solve them.

There have been notable efforts in order to quantify and provide statistical evidence assessing the extent of these problems. One of the research efforts of the EC in this sense should be mentioned is the GEWAMED project (Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources Development and Management in The Mediterranean Region, EC Research Coordinated Action, (2006- 2011)). From 2006 to 2011, this project aimed at providing information about some of the already mentioned problems. Also NGOs, national and international organizations are making significant contributions to provide a substantial information of the situation of women in the Mediterranean countries. However, we are still far from having a clear vision of the magnitude, origins and solutions to the inequity problems that women face in water for agriculture.

Gender research in agriculture water management is significant for two reasons: firstly, because identifying the magnitude and importance of the problems allows setting up strategies to solve them; secondly, because one of the effects of these gender inequity problems is that agricultural production is well below its potential as reported by FAO (The state of food and agriculture 2010-2011. Women in agriculture, closing the gender gap for development, FAO, 2011). If these shortcomings were solved, and certainly the expectations are significant, considerable increases in food production could be achieved worldwide according to FAO.

Research is not the only player in this important topic but, as always, development also plays a substantial role. The European Strategy for Gender Equality of the EC has made a significant development contribution to this issue but also other international, bilateral and national organizations. Integrating applied research and development is a winning combination that may need more attention.

Gender issues are of horizontal nature, this is to say that they should be mainstreamed in any research or development project. In the EC research projects this is the normal practice but at country level it is still far from a systematic inclusion although research and development projects are becoming more sensitive to the gender issues everywhere. It is important that any research or development projects pays attention to the gender issues but if they focus on technical issues the gender component is bound to have a limited impact. Research and development projects focusing in gender issues are likely to have greater impacts.

Several of the above issues were discussed at the EMEG Meeting held on Lisbon (June 2013) in the Water Group. Participants were supportive initially of the ideas exposed but when it came the moment of proposing research projects ideas gender was low in the priorities. Participants supported the idea that gender continues to be treated as a horizontal issue in research projects but did not felt that it was a priority topic of research. This is a reality that has to be acknowledged and consequently it becomes apparent that gender research issues related to water in agriculture may have better opportunities under the socio economic issues than under the technical ones.

Colophon: This E-Newsletter has been developed within the framework of the MED-SPRING Project (FP7-INCO.Net 311780). For further information about the project please visit the official website: <http://www.medspring.eu>. Edited/Written by MED-SPRING WP3 Team, MED-SPRING Coordination team, Dr. Juan Antonio Sagardoy and the AGORA MED-SPRING Team. Images by MED-SPRING, European Commission and Pixabay.