

Appendix I

Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development

**Recommendations and Proposals for action on the theme of:
INFORMATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND
PARTICIPATION
as adopted by the Contracting Parties (Malta, 27-30 October 1999)**

(a) Framework conditions

The strengthening of the role of civil society requires the urgent and systematic review, amendment and revision of national and local legal and institutional frameworks in most of the Mediterranean countries.

The members concerned took note of the principles of the Aarhus Convention(1998);

Regional and local authorities, NGOs and other civil society organizations must be encouraged and supported. "Dialogue fora" should be promoted and participatory schemes with active involvement of NGOs should be introduced and/or enhanced. Such schemes may include the participation of NGOs in EIA procedures and in specific projects such as biotopes management, training, monitoring, etc. as well as in sustainability plans through Local Agendas 21 and similar initiatives. Funding provision for such activities should be included in the budget.

Public Awareness, information, participation and mobilization for the environment and sustainability, need to start at an early stage. Therefore relevant issues should be introduced in the curricula of schools and adequate time provision should be made; educators should be trained appropriately; suitable pedagogical material should be produced and disseminated; the media and the Internet could be used by establishing sites on education for the environment and sustainability, with links to other sites.

(b) Specific actions proposed:

A number of the specific actions recommended by the Thematic Group are closely linked with the planned MAP information and communication policy and the MAP Secretariat should, therefore, be encouraged to utilize the input of the Thematic Group, as appropriate.

Information:

1. A reliable cost assessment of the needed additional capital investment for infrastructure as well as for running costs etc. for the achievement of comparable, reliable information throughout the Mediterranean.
2. A 2-year state-of-the-art exhibition, held in each Mediterranean country in the national language, which will remain in the country. The information will be provided for the most part by UNEP/MAP and EEA and will focus on the state of the Mediterranean environment as well as the means and mechanisms that are either in place or are needed for its improvement and for the promotion of a truly sustainable development.

Part of each exhibition will be dedicated to the respective country in which it is taking place. The exhibitions will be handled by partnership between Governments and NGOs.

Awareness:

3. Organization of a systematic opinion poll and statistically sound assessment of the awareness views, perceptions behaviour and aspirations of the Mediterranean public in the areas of environment and sustainable development, in a mode compatible with the one employed by "Eurobarometer" for Europe.
4. Invitation to the Contracting Parties to develop and implement national strategies and action plans for awareness, as integral components of their national sustainability plans, in collaboration with NGOs, in order to enhance the efficiency and credibility of the information provided. The Secretariat, eventually with the input of the Thematic Group, may provide an "Information and Awareness Strategy Framework" as a support for the work of the Contracting Parties.

Education:

5. Strengthening of the Mediterranean network of environmental educators and relevant Mediterranean networks on education for environment and sustainability.
6. Assessment of the resources needed for the training of 50 per cent of Mediterranean educators of primary schools in the most productive alternative schemes and 30 per cent of those of secondary schools by the year 2004.
7. Encouragement for the establishment of a Mediterranean register with Internet links on teaching materials, particularly audiovisual.

Participation:

8. Invitation to the Contracting Parties to identify at least one pilot participatory and mobilization project per country with the active involvement of the public. These projects at national or local level will be studied, monitored and documented in order to be publicized as possible examples of good practice. Invitation also to States to collaborate with local authorities.
9. Publication and translation of a series of manuals in various Mediterranean languages on the following issues:
 - (a). participation practices and techniques
 - (b). consensus-building methodologies
 - (c). already existing "success stories" in the area of public participation and mobilization.