

Second Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands

Segunda Reunión del Comité de Humedales Mediterráneos (MedWet/Com2) Valencia, España, 31 Enero - 3 Febrero 1999

MedWet/Com member countries and entities meet every year to assess the progress of the Committee and wetland conservation to date, share knowledge and experience on technical issues, and plan their own and the Committee's work for the next period. This year in Valencia 33 members were present¹. Absent members were:

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Israel, Italy, Syria and Turkey.

The programme of the meeting was the following:

Saturday, 30 January: Arrival of participants, informal meeting of the three centres involved in MedWet.

Sunday, 31 January: Guided field trip to the Valentian wetlands.

Monday, 1 February: Welcome by the Chairman and the Spanish hosts, first and second plenary sessions, reception by the Mayor of Valencia.

Tuesday, 2 February: Technical session on "Sustainable tourism and wetlands"², celebration of World Wetland Day 1999, two workshops (in English and French) on the proposed MedWet Action Plan 1999-2000, cultural evening and dinner.

Wednesday, 3 February: Third plenary session and departure of participants.

The plenary sessions were held in the Cultural Centre "La Beneficencia", and were chaired by Mr. Delmar Blasco, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands. Vice chairpersons were Ms. Demetra Spala, Greece, and Mr. Enrique Alonso Garcia (Spain). The technical workshop was chaired by Prof. Enrique Andreu Moliner, while the two workshops on the Action Plan were chaired by Mr. Enrique Alonso Garcia, Spain (rapporteur Mr. Tim Jones), and Mr. Jalel Laâbidi, Tunisia (rapporteur Mr. Jean Jalbert).

During the plenary sessions and the workshops the following items included in the provisional agenda were discussed:

1. Approval of the provisional agenda: Approved.
2. Discussion and approval of the MedWet/Com1 minutes: Approved as submitted.
3. Presentation of the work carried out



during MedWet: By the national executives (especially conclusions of the national seminars and measures taken to implement them):

- Albania (by Mr. Zamir Dedej);
 - Algeria (by Mr. Abdelkader Boutaous);
 - Croatia (by the Medwet Co-ordinator³);
 - Morocco (by Mr. Abdellah El Mastour);
 - Tunisia (by Mr. Jalel-Laâbidi).
4. Informative interventions by MedWet/Com members:
- Governments and entities:
 - Wetlands of Albania (Mrs. Marieta Mima, ECAT).
 - Two new Ramsar sites in Bulgaria (Mr Ljubomir Profirov).
 - Ratification of the Convention on Wetlands under way in Cyprus (Mrs. Myroula Hadjichristoforou).
 - MedWet related plans and projects in Egypt (Mr. Moustafa Fouda)
 - Wetlands in Libya (Mr. Abdulmaula Hamza).
 - NGO activities concerning wetlands protection in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Prof. Dr. Branko Micevski).
 - Monaco's wish to collaborate with MedWet/Com members (Mr. Patrick van Klaveren).
 - Current status of the Palestinian wetlands (Mr. Imad Iddin Al-Baba).
 - The Portuguese wetland unit at ICN (Mr. Luis Costa).
 - Slovenian wetlands (Mr. Boris Krizan).
 - The Spanish approach to wetlands,

including the Strategic Plan and specific novel applications (Mr. Enrique Alonso Garcia, Mr. Juan Antonio de Castro, Mrs. Isabel Lozano).

- Coastal wetlands of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Mr. Vladan Raznatovic).
 - Intergovernmental bodies:
 - Policies and funding mechanisms of the European Union for the Mediterranean (Mr. Bruno Julien, DG XI).
 - The strategic plan for biodiversity protection in the Mediterranean under preparation by the Mediterranean Action Plan Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (Mr. Marco Barbieri).
 - Activities of the Bern Convention (Mr. Gianluca Silvestrini).
 - Non-governmental organisations and wetland centres:
 - The important Bird Areas inventories of BirdLife International (Mr. Juan Criado).
 - IUCN activities and plans in the Mediterranean (Mr. Jean-Paul Taris).
 - Current activities of SEHUMED (María José Viñals).
 - Plans to provide materials for Arab-speaking countries by Wetlands International (Mr. Marcel Silvius).
 - Freshwater-related and education activities of the Mediterranean Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International (Mr. Simone Borelli).
5. Implementation of the Mediterranean Wetland Strategy: The Action plan for the

period 1999-2000 was introduced by the MedWet Co-ordinator, with the assistance of key members of the MedWet Team. This included:

5.1 Priorities agreed by MedWet/Com1, including:

- Strengthening the MedWet network (MedWet Secretarial Unit - EKBY).
- Improvement and use of the MedWet database (ICN - Portugal).

5.2 Requests and proposals by MedWet/Com members.

5.3 Other necessary actions.

5.4 Current MedWet projects (Tour du Valat):

- MedWet3 - GEF.
- MedWet4 - Evian / Danone.

The Action Plan was discussed in two workshops, were the following aspects were reviewed and conclusions reached:

- Assessment of the proposed actions and projects.
- Assigning priorities.
- Participation of members in actions and projects.
- Further projects for consideration and development.

The rapporteurs of the two workshops consolidated the conclusions and recommendations into one document, which was approved during the last plenary session (document MW/C2.F2e and f).

6. Financial resources for Mediterranean wetlands: The issue was touched upon by Mr. Bruno Julien, European Commission, in his intervention. The lack of participation from donor organisations which were invited to the meeting was noted, and the Chairman was requested to renew his efforts, so that they are present in the next meeting of the Committee.

7. Draft Resolution on Mediterranean collaboration for COP7: The text prepared by Greece and Spain was discussed and approved, with the following addition proposed by the European Commission: "ENCOURAGES the contracting parties around the Mediterranean to use and fur-



Secretary General's message on the World Wetlands Day

ther develop the instruments established under the MedWet1 and MedWet2 projects, and in particular the operational tools, within a perspective of integrated and sustainable management of wetlands in the region."

Albania confirmed its intention to sponsor the Resolution along with Greece and Spain. The Chairman requested the other members of MedWet/Com that are contracting parties to the Convention on Wetlands to indicate officially their support of the Resolution (document MW/C2.F6e and f).

8. Revision of the Rules of Procedure of MedWet/Com: The proposals made by the Chairman concerning the establishment of an Advisory Board (rule 19), and the terms "MedWet/Com" and "MedWet/Team", were approved. In article 19 b.i, the phrase "governments and institutions" was changed into "members". Similarly, in article 19 b.ii). (See document MW/C2.F5e and f).

9. Any other business:

9.1. Venue of MedWet/Com3: The invitation of Tunisia to host the Third Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee in early April 2000 was gratefully accepted.

9.2. Arrangements for Ramsar COP7: The preparations for this event (booklet on Mediterranean wetlands and MedWet, informal Mediterranean workshop on the evening of 11 May 1999, posters etc.) were presented by the MedWet Co-ordinator. It was decided that a stand (free of charges would be made available for the presentation of the MedWet initiative.

10. Conclusions: Finally the conclusions of the meeting were discussed on the basis of a draft document in English and French, and were approved with editing changes only (doc.MW/C2. F1.e and f).

Wetland Centres:

For the period 1999-2000, and as agreed during MedWet/Com2, the MedWet support structure (in short "MedWet Team") will consist of three wetland centres, under the guidance of the Ramsar Bureau, and in particular of the MedWet Co-ordinator (appointed by and reporting to the Secretary General). These centres are:

- Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat, France (Tour du Valat).
- Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre of the Goulandris Natural History Museum, Greece (EKBY).
- Sede para el Estudio de los Humedales Mediterráneos of the University of Valencia, Spain (SEHUMED). ■



Spanish Authorities

¹See Detailed List of participants (document MW/C2.F4).

²The main papers presented were: "Quality tourism and the role of wetlands", Dr. Reinhard Klein (Head of Unit, European Commission, DG XXIII), "Tourism impacts and opportunities in North Africa", Mr. Nejib Benessaiah (Tunisia), "Wetlands as a resource for sustainable tourism", Mr. José María de Juan (Spanish Ecotourism Association), "Tourism in protected areas", Mr. Andrej Sovinc (Slovenia, IUCN Parks for Life Programme), while a number of Mediterranean case studies were presented by participants.

³As Croatia was not represented at the meeting.