

Report of the General Secretariat - General Assembly Medcités ROME 3 December 1998

1- Activities

The main activities of the network since the last General Assembly held in Silifke on 3-5 November 1996 have been as follows:

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY MEDCITIES

Chronological list

Public Consultation of the Haifa's Audit and Environmental Strategy (Feb. 1997)

The results of the Haifa's audit made during 1996 was consulted to the main city's social agents. It was also presented and analysed in a participate meeting a proposal for a Haifa's Environment Strategy. This was an action of the Envimed I Life Third Countries Programme.

Expert Mission Gaza's Audit (April 1997)

As an activity of Envimed I, a team of 5 experts from Rome And Barcelona worked with the environment responsible from Gaza in the realisation of the Audit. They were co-ordinated by an international expert, as a technical co-ordinator and by Franco La Torre as the strategic co-ordinator.

Technical tour to Marseille and Barcelona. (April 1997)

As an activity of the Envimed I Life Third Countries Programme, a group of municipal environment thecnicians visited environment services and installations at Marseille and Barcelona. There were from the towns of Dubrovnik, El Minha, Haifa, Limassol, Tirana, Tetouan, Tripoli, Sfax, Sousse and Silifke.

Medbranch network meeting in Geneva (April 1997)

METAP asked Medcities for collaborate with a new Metap network with the transmission of our know-how in audits, environment strategies, and action plans. Medbranch is a network of 6 hot spots in water composed of Casablanca-Mohamedia,(Morocco), Oued El Harrach(Algeria), Lake Sud de Tunis(Tunisia), Lake Mayrud-Alexandria(Egypt), Zarqa basin(Jordan) and Aleppo(Syria).It was a starting meeting.

Bureau meeting in Paris (May 1997)

It was a meeting for the concretion of the network's activities programme.

Identification mission about Sousse's traffic (Sept. 1997)

Financed by the UNDP-METAP, a traffic expert from Barcelona helped the Sousse municipality to analyse the mobility situation of and to concrete an action programme to be realised according with the financial possibilities.

Participation in the Policy Dialogue on Municipal Audits and Urban Environment Planning and Management in Tetouan (October 1997).

This meeting was organised for the Med-Branch network by the International Academy of Environment and the METAP. Medcities collaborated in the organisation with the exposition of the experiences of Limassol, Tripoli, Tetouan, Sousse, Sfax, Silifke, Rome and the Technical and General Secretariat (UTDA and Barcelona) of the Network.

Participation in the Urban Environment Forum, Shanghai, 6-8 October.

This meeting was organised by the UNEP and HABITAT, Medcities sent a Haifa's municipal representative, financed by METAP, and the UTDA. They described our experience and we strengthened the Medcities knowledge about the strategies for urban sustainable development

METAP National Focal Points meeting in Blend (Slovenia) November 1997

Metap demanded Medcities to expose our networking experience

Ecotourism Workshop in Silifke (November 1997)

Organised with the support of METAP with two clear aims:

To advance the Silifke Ecotourism Project and to promote sustainable tourism in the Region. There were 100 local participants in the first day session to determine the Silifke project and 27 international participants in the second and third day sessions to develop tourism in the region. Amongst them were representatives of some towns of Medcities (Silifke, Gaza, Limassol, Tetouan, Tripoli and Barcelona). Strategies for future actions were identified.

Environment Performance Indicators workshop in Beirut (December.1997)

It was organised by the Blue Plan (MAP), co-financed by METAP. The technical Secretariat of Medcities assisted to the meeting and started with the Lebanese Environment Authorities, Tripoli's municipality representatives the co-ordination of the National Environment Observatory and the Tripoli's observatory

Proposals to the LIFE Third Countries 1998 (January 1998)

As Medcities could not present a proposal to this E.U. programme, because we had yet presented another which was almost conceded, we agreed with UNDP and UTD to help them in two propositions which supported Medcities towns initiatives. The UNDP proposition was about Ecotourisme in Silifke and Tripoli, and the UTD one was about the urban wastes valorisation and elimination in 6 Syrian towns, including Latakia and Aleppo. Unfortunately any of them has been accepted for different reasons.

Concession of the ENVIMED II Programme by LIFE - Third Countries Programme of the European Union. (February 1998)

This will make it possible to carry out the Environmental Audits of Ashdod (Israel) and Larnaka, to set up an Environmental Observatory in Tripoli (Lebanon) and an Environmental Information Network for private enterprises, local administration and the NGO's, lead by Rome and with two other cities from Medcities.

It is a 567.800 ECU Project with 482.700 ECUS provided by the Life Programme of the European Commission, to be carried out during 1998 and 1999.

Medcities Bureau meeting in Rome (March 1998)

The network's bureau meeting was held in Rome with the presence of a representative of the METAP, Ms. T. Akhtar. There was decided to change the town of the next General Assembly from Tirana to Rome, and co-ordinated management questions.

Start of the PLISE project. Creation of the Rome's and the Limassol's management committees.(April 1998)

As an activity of the Envimed II programme, the Hise project (Environment information service for the public in Rome, Limassol and Sousse) started with the creation of the local committees in Rome and Limassol for the respective local management. It was realised also a mission of representatives of Rome to Limassol for a definition of a joint and local work strategy and programme.

Mission of PLISE Rome representatives to Sousse and creation of the local management committee.(June 1998)

As in Limassol, it was defined a joint and local work strategy and programme for Sousse, with the presence of the Rome's co-ordination programme team.

Urban Environment Forum , Moscow (June 1998)

Limassol representative participated as Medcities delegate. The second forum was an opportunity to check the experiences of other cities of the HABITAT network.

Proposal with the UNDP, CEDARE and the European Wastes Club for the SMAP- E.U. Programme (June1998)

A 1200000 ECU programme about the managing the urban solid wastes in the Mediterranean was built between UNDP(leader), Medcities, Cedare and the European Wastes Club,(an association of the high level professionals of wastes). There will be three territorial sub-projects in Alexandria (Valorisation and elimination), Zarka (management of the collection), and Limassol (recycling in a tourist and industrial town).The programme will have an awareness part, conducted by Cedare, and a communication part supported by Medcities PLISE project and by a body of guidelines made by the EWC. The SMAP managers have communicated us this last November that our project has been very well valorised, and have proposed to reduce it to 900000 ECU, and we have made it.

Public consultation of the Gaza's Audit and Environment Strategy (Sept. 1998)

The results of the Gaza's Audit and a proposal of Environment Strategy were not presented in Gaza in the previewed moment for a border closure. The UNDP-METAP financed this presentation to the main social agents of Gaza.

Plise transnational training seminar in Rome.(November 1998)

The Rome, Sousse and Limassol responsables of the PLISE met in Rome for a training seminar conducted by an expert of the ECO-Counselling Europa. They also contrast their local proposals for the environment public information services.

Mission for defining feasibility studies of two environment priorities in Gaza (Nov. 1998)

As a result of a co-operation agreement between Gaza, Barcelona and Tel-Aviv, signed the last September, two experts from Barcelona were at Gaza to make feasibility studies of composting of sludge from the sewage treatment plant and of reducing the liquid pollution of the tile industry.

Other main activities carried through the two years.

Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, MAP (Mediterranean Action Plan).

As one of the three representatives of the local administration in the above mentioned Commission, we have participated in the meeting of the MCSD and in Rabat (Dec. 96), Palma de Mallorca (May 97), Sophia Antipolis (Oct. 97), Monaco (Oct. 98) and in the meeting of the Contracting Parties in Tunis, (Nov. 98).

In both meetings proposals of the Commission were presented on Integrated Coastal Zone Management sectorial group, which has been lead by Medcities jointly with the Ministry of Environment of Morocco. These proposals has been made in an international workshop organised by this Sectorial Commission in Benidorm (Sept. 97). The proposals of the sectorial group were accepted partially. The proposal to initiate the works for a new MAP contracting parties convention for the integrated management of the Coastal Zones in the Mediterranean was not considered opportune for the moment for the State representans in the Contracting Parties Meeting of Tunis.

In the Tunis meeting Silifke and Dobrovnic were chosen as local authorities representatives in the MCSD. It is appropriate to underline that 4 of the 5 local authorities representatives in the MCSD are members of Medcities, (Rome, Silifka and Dubrovnic) and the network itself.

We have also participated in the works of the Sectorial Commission on the Management of Urban/Rural Development. The Monaco meeting decided to priorizate into this group the Urban Development studies and demanded to Medcities to joint the Egypt representative and the Blue Plan in the impulsion of the group, as the Integrated Coastal Zone Management group has finished its task.

Development of the Strategic Mediterranean Planning Project

Financed by the Programme of the European Commission.

Haifa, Tetouan and Barcelona, together with Malaga and Catania, are developing this project (1997-1998) with the objective of integrating their Environmental Strategies into a more general Urban Development Strategy of the cities, as well as extending the experience in the Med-Region. follow-up programe.

2 - Balance of the Action Plans for cities of the network

On the basis of the Secretariat's information we can state that in general the priority action defined in the various audits and specific studies done, is being carried out.

In Tangier and in Tetouan, with the co-operation of Medcities, an agreement has been achieved with BEI to fund, by means of a loan from the Moroccan State, the sewage treatment systems. In Tetouan, Medcities has collaborate with Tetuan authorities to obtain from the Spanish Co-operation a subside for the improvement of the current landfill, its closure later on and the creation of a new one. For the moment has been approved the two first steps.

In Tripoli and El-Mina work is being finalised on the improvement of the solid waste provisional landfill The World Bank is starting a feasibility study for a new equipment to substitute it, according the conclusions of our Audit. The network of drains is being renewed. In Tripoli an inventory of 44 monuments and an information and study centre of historical heritage have been carried out. A programme has been drawn up with the participation of several ministries and the private sector for the renovation work, and the work done in (landfill or incineration plant), to start Souk Sagha (Jewellers' market) is a model to be applied. The electricity, telephone and street lighting networks are also being improved. A new abattoir has been opened. And finally, together with the Lebanese Government, a definition of the Environmental Observatory has been started.

The sewage treatment system has been completed in Limassol, which includes recycling of the sewage, and a new system of evaluation and elimination of solid waste is being formalised.

In Gaza a new landfill with a pilot compost plant, a sewage treatment plant, and a slaughterhouse have been inaugurated. Barcelona-Gaza co-operation project that is being drawn up. to work in purifying the waste water from the building material industry and the re-use of sewage within the framework of the compost plant.

In Silifke work has been done to define the priority in eco-tourism of the social agents involved and inform them of this, as described in the previous point. The Turkish central authorities nave prioritized the sewage system project.

In Haifa work has been done to inform the public of the Environmental Strategy, and the following action points have been included in the municipal action plan for 1998:

- Cleaning and rehabilitating the River Kishon.
- Conveying solid waste out of Haifa to an authorised landfill.
- ☞ -Promoting environmentally-friendly public transportation and railroad systems.
- ☞ -Reducing traffic pollution.
- ☞ -Developing landscapes of valleys and "green areas".
- ☞ -Renewing old residential areas
- ☞
- ☞ However lack of funds largely prevents carrying these plans out despite great determination from the parties responsible in the municipality.

A clear case is Sousse. There, despite the fact that after the audit a Project for Management of the Environment of Sousse was drawn up, with the assistance of the USAID and the participation of the General Directorate of the Local Communities of the Tunisian Government, and with the participation of the civil society of Sousse, it has been difficult to follow up this experience because of a lack of financial and organisational means. This was explained in the speech given by the representative of Sousse in the conference on audits and municipal environmental plans that took place in Tetouan last October, which has already been mentioned in the previous section.

This conference underlined the importance of increasing the capacity for municipal action, both in urban environmental initiative and the possibility to manage funding mechanisms for this.

Rome, 3th December 1998