

Euro-Mediterranean Academic Forum on Water Resources Sustainability in Semiarid Areas

Palacio de San Esteban, Regional Government of Murcia, Murcia

Spain, November 4, 2011



Campus Mare Nostrum 37/38, sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education, together with the Euro-Mediterranean Water Institute (IEA) and the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), have promoted the Euro-Mediterranean Academic Forum on Water Resources Sustainability in Semiarid climate Areas, an academic initiative to discuss, identify and evaluate challenges and interventions in the field of water management and sustainability.

In the first kick-off meeting in the city of Murcia, Spain, on the fourth day November of 2011, a steering group came up with a declaration, which both underscores the need for such an academic forum and sets up the agenda for the forthcoming actions.

Declaration of Euro-Mediterranean Academic Forum on Water Resources Sustainability in Semiarid Areas

The undersigned institutions,

-Campus Mare Nostrum 37/38. (Universidad de Murcia and Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena), Spain

-Euro-Mediterranean Water Institute (IEA), Spain

-Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Spain

-Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), Slovenia

-L'Institut Méditerranéen de l'eau Marseille (IME), France

-University of Haifa. Israel

-Moulay Ismail University. Meknès, Morocco

-Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

-International Research & Application Center For Karst Water Resources.
Hacettepe University, Turkey

DECLARE

In the context of the Mediterranean basin, the challenges faced by different areas struck by water scarcity, supply and management issues are huge.

Improving water management resources has become of paramount importance for a wide array of international organizations. The Mediterranean research and academic institutions face increasing demands from social agents to deliver scientific outputs that help us understand singular problems for the efficient management of water resources in these specific climate environments, usually threatened by the imbalance between available resources and demands.

The ARLEM report on local water management in the Mediterranean, agreed in Agadir January 29, 2011, concluded the following: “The Mediterranean basin suffers from an acute shortage of water, which impacts on the environment and the development of socio-economic activities that affect millions of people in the region. This shortage could worsen in coming years, for climate-related, economic, demographic and social reasons. Local and regional leaders are aware of this challenge and have taken on board the aims and measures set out in the draft Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean, convinced of the need for a joint response by all tiers of government in the area concerned”.

Besides, the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water, closely related to the EU 2020 Strategy, aims to ensure good quality water in sufficient quantities for all legitimate uses.

As part of our mission, the academia and the experts in water management in semi-arid areas are committed to offering our society more efficient ways to deal with the pressing issue of water scarcity and its management.

In order to meet the aforementioned commitment, *Campus Mare Nostrum*, together with the *Instituto Euromediterraneo del agua* and *EMUNI*, have promoted a major meeting in the Region of Murcia that brought in key academic and professional Mediterranean Institutions. The purpose of this meeting was twofold: to promote academic quality activities in the field of water sustainability in semiarid climate areas, and to set up a specialist academic cluster on this area. The Region of Murcia offers a unique setting for the development of this initiative as per its climate, landscape and hydrological characteristics but, most significantly, as it hosts high profile research infrastructures such as the forthcoming Water Resources Platform (*Plataforma de Recursos Hídricos*).

The undersigned parties have agreed on the following:

- (1) To set up the Euro-Mediterranean Academic Forum on Water Resources Sustainability in Semiarid Areas. This forum will be implemented as a network and will be used as the tool of the signing institutions to discuss academic and professional issues in relation to specific problems on water sustainability in semiarid climate areas. This Forum will be in line with the recommendations of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) spearheaded by UFM, ARLEM and the Committee of the Regions.
- (2) To set up the Cluster on Water of the Euromediterranean University (EMUNI).

- (3) To set up a permanent EMUNI-CMN-IEA expert think tank on Water offering support to the Committee of the Regions and ARLEM in the activities regarding water resources sustainability in semiarid areas.
- (4) To develop multi institutional postgraduate, Master and Doctoral, programs, to ensure that proper training and transference is provided on the topic of water sustainability in semiarid climate areas.
- (5) To sign a multi-lateral agreement which underscores the commitment of the undersigned Universities, Research Councils and Professional Organizations in the field of water resources sustainability in semiarid climate areas to providing joint quality research and training initiatives.
- (6) To disseminate and promote among the Academia the guidelines of the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) regarding more efficient uses of water resources in semiarid areas.
- (7) To Foster the development of hubs of research in Universities, Research Centres, Regions and Mediterranean territories so as to disseminate, apply and evaluate the proposals of UFM, ARLEM and the Committee of the Regions across the Mediterranean basin.

AGENDA

The undersigned parties agree on an agenda that includes a follow-up of the decisions above and which includes the following:

- a. To hold a meeting of academic specialists and water management experts in December 2011 to outline more specific actions to pursue during 2012.
- b. To hold a meeting of academic specialists and water management experts in December 2011 to outline the particulars of a joint Master's Program on water resources sustainability in semiarid climate areas. In particular, the modular structure of the program needs to be addressed and discussed in the light of the academic and professional offer of each undersigned party.
- c. To liaise with ARLEM and submit the contents of our Declaration to be considered in the next ARLEM General Assembly.

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

Upon valuable consideration and mutual promises, the institutions named below as "Partners" hereby covenant and agree to be bound to the following as their **COLLABORATION AGREEMENT** (this "Agreement") dated this fourth day of November of the year 2011 for the cooperation **to develop academic, research and transfer of knowledge activities in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.**

The present Collaboration Agreement is signed on behalf of the following Institutions:

Campus Mare Nostrum 37/38, Spain

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

European Mediterranean University (EMUNI), Slovenia

Moulay Ismail University Meknes, Morocco

Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Spain

The Euro-Mediterranean Water Institute (IEA), Spain

The Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), France

University of Haifa, Israel

Hacettepe University, Turkey

AGREEMENT

Factual Background

The University of Murcia and the University of Cartagena reached agreement to set up and further develop a higher education international excellence campus initiative known as CAMPUS MARE NOSTRUM 37/38, as expressed on Directive EDU/1069/2010 (Spanish *Boletín Oficial del Estado* of the 30th day of April of 2010).

CAMPUS MARE NOSTRUM 37/38 was awarded the International Excellence Campus status by the Spanish Ministry of Education on October 21, 2010.

The Instituto Euromediterráneo del Agua and the CSIC are founders of the Strategic Alliance of Campus Mare Nostrum.

The EMUNI is one of the main allied of Campus Mare Nostrum.

CAMPUS MARE NOSTRUM 37/38 aims to promote academic, research and innovation excellence of a high international standard, especially in the areas of agri-food-based bioeconomics, quality of life and health-related technologies and the Mediterranean Sea and marine technology. CAMPUS MARE NOSTRUM strives to make a substantial contribution in the economic and developmental growth of the Mediterranean basin.

The missions of all the institutions involved are to foster the advancement of learning in fields which are of particular interest for the development of Europe and all the Mediterranean countries.

The Mediterranean basin faces specific problems concerning the management of water resources, including shortage, drought and scarcity. These factors have had a negative impact on our economies and it is expected that the situation will deteriorate in the forthcoming years. It is necessary, therefore, to approach these problems from an academic, scientific, perspective so as to devise ways to manage water resources in a more efficient way. Campus Mare Nostrum has an interest in research in semiarid climates and, together with CMN partners, aims to contribute to providing solutions and gaining knowledge in related areas. The set-up of the *Plataforma Experimental de Recursos Hídricos*, an initiative of the Spanish and Regional Murcia Governments, is an good example of the forthcoming research and development infrastructures that can contribute to such insights.

All the institutions undersigned have an interest in developing academic, research and transfer of knowledge activities in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

Therefore, the partners agree to sign this AGREEMENT, which includes the following areas of cooperation:

Partnership Agreement

1: The setting-up of an Academic Forum in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates, which can serve as a space for academic debate and discussion of ideas, initiatives and common problems concerning training, research and transfer of knowledge in the aforementioned field.

2: The development and promotion of post-graduate education initiatives, especially the setting-up of a joint Master's Program in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

3: The development and joint participations in cooperation projects of relevance to the Mediterranean area and the aims and scopes of the partners in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

4: The organization and participation of events, conferences, summits, etc. of interest for the aims and scopes of all partners.

5: Lifelong training projects and other programs.

6: Mutual service rendering in the areas of infrastructure, advocacy and advising, and technical know-how among the partners in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

7: Joint activities which seek to promote and disseminate research, cooperation, development and technological advancement in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

8: Joint activities which seek to promote cooperation, academic and research projects with partners coming from southern non-EU Member states in the field of water resources sustainability in semi-arid climates.

10: Other areas of mutual interest as deemed necessary to implement this Agreement.

The development of this agreement will be further specified through programs and actions which will be promoted by the partners by means of special agreements which shall specify the work plan, budget, funding sources, coordination mechanisms, the proprietor of the tangible property, whether real or personal, purchased, built or created within the scope of such actions, and, if applicable, the regulation which will determine the uses and property of the outcome or outcomes of such actions.

EUROMEDITERRANEAN ACADEMIC AND COOPERATION FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE WATER USE IN SEMIARID CLIMATIC REGIONS

Murcia 4 November 2011

I wish to thank all of you who have come here honouring us with your presence. The IEA Foundation wants to contribute in this project with its best efforts and compromising seriously in doing so, and the reason for that commitment is that the issue that gathered us here today is at the core of our institution, as I am going to explain.

The IEA Foundation was born just for this kind of task. You can read it in the resolution of the Council of Europe (2001) that recommended the creation of the Foundation with the goal of collaborate in the study and research of water as a natural resource in the Mediterranean basin, regarding especially the problems of draught and scarcity. This mission is by no means surprising because you can point out Murcia (and the South-East of Spain) as the most water-stressed region in Europe.

Since then, I mean, since the very moment of its creation (and up to the present day) the IEA Foundation has worked, very close to the Spanish universities, supporting research in the water field, with nearly 97 agreements of cooperation and 25 projects with a wide range of matters involved. Since 2002 the total amount invested has been around 11 million euros, which means the most important part of our budget every year. The result of all those intellectual works has been published, to share and transfer the knowledge, being remarkable to mention more than 20 books

and other minor publications. I will explain some more details of that in a moment.

The Recommendation 1471 of the Council of Europe (launching the Foundation) also states that “the education sector has a role to play in fostering environmental awareness among the younger generation; efficient use of water is a vital aspect of this awareness”. In consequence, the Foundation has developed several post-graduate courses in water issues in collaboration with the academic system in our Spanish Mediterranean area.

The early years of our creation and activity (2001-2005) were focused on our most immediate geographic area, and the attention was focused in a limit number of topics. The end of this period was the organization in Murcia of the II National Congress on Water Law (the previous one was hold 20 years earlier) and the results of that event was published in a 1112 (one thousand one hundred and twelve) pages book which is certainly one of the best guideline for the understanding of the legal system and water governance in Spain.

This initial scope was enlarged in what we may call the second period of the Foundation, (2005-2010). With new premises in the Campus of the Murcia University, settled in a building belonging to the Regional Government, the Foundation has broaden its activities with the incorporation and cooperation with other Universities and Institutes, not only Spanish, but also in Europe and America (of all of which the Director of the foundation has spoken already and surely is going to mention in more detail afterwards). From the beginning, cooperation with Universities has been one of the key activities of our Foundation.

A very close institution, which deserves a specific mention, is the IME of Marseille. We share a common understanding of the water resources problems in our area, and maintain a strong cooperation in all kind of activities and projects, the most important of them is the Mediterranean Water Forum and, of course, our involvement in the 6 World Water Forum in Marseille March 2012, in which we have responsibilities in non conventional water resources policy. I certainly cannot mention all the results of this second period, but allow me to remark our contribution to the UE Social and Economic Committee assessment “Managing water scarcity

and drought problems in Europe”, in a meeting held in Murcia with that goal, and I think that is remarkable the statement included in the final document related to the need of a new formulation in the European water policy precisely to make room for this kind of scarcity problems, closely related with that of ecological status.

So the Foundation faces now a third period in its life, with a strong academic implications and international commitments, as no doubt represents the ITCS project related to the study of water in semiarid regions, of which we expect (in its due time) important results. (I find not necessary to mention the slowing in speed of this project right now because of the economic crisis in Europe and Spain).

So, as you can see, we have strong reasons for to be deeply involved and interested in projects of the kind we are speaking today, because it is just at the heart of our interest and expectations for the future, according to the mandate given to us in the last “Junta de Patronato”, that is, the board of founders and members of the government of the Foundation.

Having said the most important aspects of the Foundation, so you can see our past and immediate future, it is necessary as well to mention some notice of the legal framework in which the foundation must develop its activities, quoting briefly that the kind of legal personality endowed to Foundations in the Spanish legal system provides all the necessary legal means to be a suitable partner in international activities, European projects and common activities, all of that in a suitable legal and institutional framework with more capabilities to work with, even better than with the public administration itself, to which of course we belong by means of financial support and the number of membership administration-representatives in our board of directors.

Legally, the IEA Foundation is a public sector Foundation endowed with legal personality and full capacity to work, whose aim is to promote and fulfil studies related to water aspects, developing research and development activities on problems related to water resources and environmental repercussions, all of that in the framework of the European policies for Water and Sustainable Development. The members of the Foundation are: The Regional Governments of Murcia, Regional Government of Valencia

and the central Government of the Nation, the Town of Murcia, two financial institutions, the Universities of Murcia and Cartagena, and the Ramon Areces Foundation (owner of the Corte Inglés, a big Spanish retailer). Of course we count as well with honorific members such as the president of EMUNI, Mr Joseph Mifsud (special welcome to him in this regard).

The IEA Foundation is composed by a full time and partial time multidisciplinary team, researchers who are experts in different water related issues such as governance, hydrology, water treatment technologies, law, economy of water and so on.

With this background the IEA Foundation could contribute in the context of this academic project providing several means, good practices, case studies, and interesting experiences quite valuable to the better comprehension of the water scarcity and the governance related to this issue. The IEA Foundation also expects to obtain benefits from the possible collaboration, that is, to enrich our knowledge in order to increase our advising capacity, which would further cooperate to improve the management of water resources in the Region of Murcia.

As a conclusion we may say that we have all the problems related with water scarcity areas (drought, floods, desertification, erosion, over pumped aquifers, water salted intrusion) and we have developed interesting solutions such as the high level of reuse of water and one of the most successful agricultural practices in Europe.

The problem of water scarcity in the Mediterranean requires common efforts and multilevel cooperation. Academy is one of the key elements of the process, and we are we are willing to contribute to this common effort.

Antonio Martinez Nieto
IEA Foundation
Secretary General