

# **11<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Committee meeting**

## **Vienna, 29-30/6/2006**

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Research and Technological Development (MoCo) was held in Vienna under the Austrian Presidency of the EU between 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. It was attended by delegates representing the Ministers or National Authority in charge of scientific research and technological development of 9 countries of the Mediterranean Area (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey), as well as 18 EU Member States (Austria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

The MoCo took note of the overview presentation of Euro-Mediterranean S&T cooperation and welcomed the successful completion of the projects, which were initiated by the MoCo such as ASBIMED, EuroMEDANet and MED7.

It also noted with interest the presentations by the European Commission on the international cooperation activities of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The MoCo welcomed the EUMEDconnect project as a good example of synergy between a research related activity and the MEDA programme, as well as it welcomed the EuroMedITI initiative aiming at reinforcing innovation capacities in the region.

It also acknowledged the presentation and the work of the Moroccan National Information Point as a good example of a Community funded project which led to an increased participation in the activities of the Framework Programme.

The members of the Monitoring Committee:

- Reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of good neighbourhood, mutual respect and confidence.

- Considered that the Euro-Mediterranean region is a vital space in which dialogue, common actions and cooperation must prevail.
- Recognized that cooperation in RTD is a useful tool for peace building.
- Recognized the determinant role of science and technology in economic and social development.
- Acknowledged the importance of research and innovation in the objective of a free trade area between Europe and the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs).
- Highlighted the multiple partnerships that have been initiated on bilateral and regional levels between the scientific communities of the Euro-Mediterranean countries, and encouraged the strengthening of them.
- Expressed the will to work towards a Euro-Mediterranean Research and Innovation Area.
- **Acknowledged:**
  - ◆ the need to consolidate the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue in order to identify and select common S&T priorities,
  - ◆ the particular interest of the countries which have recently joined the EU to develop cooperation activities with the Mediterranean Partner Countries,
  - ◆ the benefit of building on existing and future bilateral cooperation programmes as seed for the preparation of multilateral activities,
  - ◆ the necessity to involve as many Mediterranean countries as possible in any future S&T coordination platforms.
  - ◆ **Recommended** the implementation of the conclusions of the two Working Groups annexed to this document (annex 1 and 2).
  - ◆ **Supported** the proposal of the Turkish authorities to organize the next MoCo meeting in Turkey.
  - ◆ **Supported** the proposal of the Egyptian authorities to organize a Euro-Mediterranean S&T Ministerial Meeting in Egypt.

## **The role of the MoCo**

The new Framework Programme and Competitiveness and Innovation Programme offer many opportunities for the MPCs. However, the realization of these opportunities constitutes a real challenge. In this context, the MoCo, which has been established as bi-regional forum for science policy following a Council decision needs to intensify and streamline its functioning. An INCO-NET type activity in which all MoCo members are involved would be instrumental in intensifying the awareness, capacity building activities and functioning of the MoCo.

To maximise their impact, MoCo recommendations must be transmitted towards the EU Institutions and the National Authorities in the EU Member States as well as in the MPCs.

The success of the MoCo is dependent on the continuing strong commitment from the EU Member States, the Mediterranean Partner Countries and the European Commission.

## Conclusions of Working Group I

### *FP7 Implementation concerning Euro-Mediterranean S&T Cooperation*

#### **Background:**

Since 1992, considerable RTD activities have been successfully undertaken in the Mediterranean region through the successive Framework Programmes (FP) and especially in the International Cooperation (INCO) sub-programmes. This activity should continue and be strengthened in the forthcoming FP7.

Although the international dimension of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme was not confined to a specific programme but was inherent in all the European research activities, most of the cooperation with Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) took place in the framework of the INCO programme. At the regional level, the programme was essential to promote, structure and develop the participation of MPCs in the European Research Area. These achievements led to legitimate expectations which should be taken into account in the implementation of FP7.

#### **International S&T Cooperation in FP7:**

The International S&T Cooperation activities developed in FP7 will be found in particular in:

##### **Ø the Cooperation Programme:**

The main objective of this programme is to gain European leadership in key areas through cooperation of industry and research institutions. All thematic priorities are open for participation of third countries as already in the previous FPs. In addition, specific actions for international cooperation are foreseen.

MoCo has analysed the content of the Cooperation Programme and acknowledges that most of the recommended topics are very much in line with the recommendations of the MED 7 Project. MoCo recommends that the conclusions of the MED 7 Project should be used as input when designing the specific International Cooperation activities of the Cooperation Work Programmes. In the future, the Commission representatives of thematic priorities should be involved in the process of identification and implementation of the common MPCs and the EU Member States S&T priorities.

MoCo recommends that the specific needs and interests of the MPCs be addressed through dedicated calls requiring the participation of MPC partners in these specific actions.

Furthermore, MoCo recommends the preparation of thematic ERA-NET proposals between Europe and the Mediterranean Countries. Considering that these initiatives aim at reinforcing the efficiency and impact of ongoing bilateral cooperation, such thematic ERA-NETs on a geographical basis should include MPCs as contractors.

### **Ø the Ideas Programme:**

The objective of this programme is to enhance dynamism, creativity and excellence of European research at the frontier of knowledge through “investigator-driven” research projects. Care should be taken that this includes highly qualified researchers from MPCs.

### **Ø the People Programme:**

MoCo welcomes the new mobility scheme for the EU's neighbouring countries and countries with Science and Technology Agreements. It recommends to promote the participation of MPCs in all the activities foreseen in the People Programme.

### **Ø the Capacities Programme:**

The objective of this programme is to develop research and innovation capacities, so that the European scientific community has the best possible capacities at its services. In addition to the horizontal activities explicitly dedicated to “International Cooperation”, it is important to note the relevant role of international cooperation also in the other activities dedicated to research infrastructures, Research for the Benefit of SMEs, Regions of Knowledge, Research Potential, Science in Society, and Coherent Development of Policies.

For the horizontal activities in support of *International Cooperation (INCO)* MoCo makes the following recommendations:

- ***Bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation (INCO-NET):***

MoCo welcomes the Commission's proposal to support the development of bi-regional coordination platforms aimed at identifying jointly S&T priorities

within the frame of a fruitful dialogue as well as reinforcing the participation of MPCs in FP7.

In this sense, the sustainability and continuity of the existing Euro-Mediterranean platforms (ASBIMED Knowledge Base, ESTIME, INNFORMED, EUROMEDANET, ...) should be ensured. The newly proposed INCO-NET actions could be a very appropriate tool for this. MoCo offers to act as steering committee for these actions. Care should be taken that all MoCo members are involved.

MoCo also recommends that synergies with the other specific programmes, in particular in thematic areas, are ensured during the preparation and implementation of these activities.

- ***Bilateral S&T Cooperation platforms:***

MoCo acknowledges the need for a specific activity which would help to implement the Action Plans of countries with an S&T Agreement or of those in the process of negotiating one.

- ***Support for the coordination of national policies on International Cooperation (INCO):***

Synergies have to be sought between the European policy in S&T cooperation in the Mediterranean Area and policies conducted by each of the Member States of the EU. This could be done through the ERA-NET scheme, it being understood that the Commission would put emphasis on the regional dimension of the activities. MoCo recommends the preparation of an ERA-NET proposal on international scientific cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean Partner Countries.

### **Awareness and dissemination:**

Sustaining and reinforcing the Information Point structure developed in FP6 remains a major priority, and the development of national information networks in the MPCs should now be supported. Ongoing support to the Information Points should include their networking with the EU National Contact Points as well as close cooperation with the European Commission services.

### **Management simplification:**

MoCo stresses the need to facilitate the participation of Mediterranean Countries through the option to use administrative and financial rules adapted to their own structures and regulations as well as a more flexible management of the activities within the FP 7 rules for participation.

### **Innovation:**

Innovation is a very important issue in the MPCs as well as in the EU.

The establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Space (EMIS) needs to be supported.

In the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (2007-2013, CIP) international cooperation still needs to be addressed. MoCo recommends the opening of this programme to the participation of partners from MPCs.

In relation to this point, information campaigns are needed to stimulate the participation of SMEs from MPCs in FP7.

### **Coordination of international cooperation in FP7:**

MoCo stresses the need to coordinate activities carried out in the biregional coordination platforms, which will be supported by the Capacities Programme as well as the research activities which will be carried out in the Cooperation Programme.

## Conclusions of Working Group II

### **Synergies between FP7 and the European Neighbourhood Policy**

In order to identify synergies, the Working Group discussed the current state of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the procedures for its implementation.

The adoption of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will shortly be completed. The global budget for the Instrument will be 11.45 B Euros for the period 2007-2013, the larger part of which will be for the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). The Instrument will support bilateral and multilateral activities.

The MoCo, which has been established following a Council decision, has the legitimacy to forward suggestions for activities that could be considered by the ENPI.

#### **a) Bilateral activities**

Bilateral activities will be guided by Action Plans for each beneficiary country. The Action Plans have a common structure with a specific chapter on R&D. The content of the Action Plans is negotiated between the concerned country and the European Commission before its formal adoption by the Joint EU/Partner State Association Council. The duration of the Action Plans is 3 to 5 years depending on the country.

Action Plans have been approved for Israel, Jordan, the Palestine Authority, Morocco and Tunisia (S&T/R&D extracts are attached as annex although there may be R&D and Innovation related activities under other headings of the Action Plan). The Action Plans for Egypt and Lebanon are almost finalized. Action Plans for the other MPCs may follow.

Country Strategy Papers (2007-2013) including National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) are currently under development. The focus is now on the prioritization of the foreseen activities and their implementation. The national authorities and the Commission lead this process.

Key instruments for the support of the implementation of the Action Plans are technical assistance and other forms of intervention such as:

- Twinning, i.e. medium to long term projects involving experts from EU Member States who work and deliver in the respective country.

- TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the Institution Building Unit of the Directorate-General Enlargement of the European Commission), i.e. single events (e.g. workshops) organized in the respective country.

### *Conclusions*

- The MoCo delegates will follow-up the implementation of the chapters concerning R&D and Innovation and related matters including the prioritization of the activities in the National Indicative Programmes.
- MoCo is used as an umbrella for exchanging experiences and good practices related to ENPI even though the definition of the bilateral activities under ENPI remains a national responsibility.

### *Recommendation*

- MoCo recommends the support of research capacity building within ENPI.

## **b) Multilateral activities**

This part is still under development by the European Commission in consultation with the Euro-Med partners, the EC playing a key role in the process. It is expected that the Strategy Papers will be, to a large extent, a continuation of the Regional part of the MEDA Programme. This part of the ENPI is of particular interest for MoCo, as it has by definition a multilateral character.

### *Conclusions/Recommendations*

MoCo recommends to develop activities that could fit under this part of ENPI such as:

- networking of main research entities between the MoCo member countries in view of a better integration of the MPCs in ERA;
- supporting and developing e-infrastructures for Research and Education purposes (link to the GEANT and other ICT applications in the MPCs).

## **Synergies with FP7**

It is important to recognize that FP7 and ENPI are separate mechanisms with different scope and procedures. Nonetheless, there are several activities that could be taken on board by ENPI to support and facilitate the participation of the MPCs in the activities of FP7.

Activities could include, for example:

- the development or consolidation of National Information Point structures in MPCs;
- support for the implementation of S&T Cooperation Agreements.

Such requests should be considered under the bilateral activities of the ENPI.

In addition, activities like the networking of main research institutions or development of e-infrastructures could be considered under the multilateral activities of the ENPI.

## Annex to the Conclusions of Working Group II

### ENP ACTION PLANS SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

#### **Israel**

*Promote further cooperation in science and technology*

- Promote further integration of Israel in the European Research Area, including the approximation of Science and Technology policies
- Reinforce the participation of Israel in the regional S&T co-operation in the Euro-Med area and facilitate ties between Israeli experts and their regional colleagues
- Promote a dialogue on science and society issues, including questions related to ethics
- Promote further co-operation in the fields of bio-technologies and space. Promote further cooperation on space-related matters with European actors including ESA, where appropriate, and on specific projects of mutual interest in the space domain.

#### **Jordan**

*Accelerate the integration of Jordan into the European Research Area and the Community Framework Programme*

- Complete negotiations and start implementation of the Science and Technology agreement
- Put into place and reinforce mutual information systems
- Put into place the network of national contact points for the 6th Framework programme and connect the RDT-I operators
- Organise the EU-Jordanian co-operation in RDT-I
- Strengthen the Higher Council for Science and Technology and the Higher Committee for Scientific Research
- Develop a sound policy for Scientific Research and Development
- To facilitate Jordan's participation in the 6th Community R&D Framework Programmes and in other EU scientific activities.

*Develop the scientific and technological capacity with a focus on the use of RTD results by the industrial and SME sector*

- Reinforce the human resources, as well as the material and institutional means to improve the capacities of the RTD-I operators.
- Organise a concerted interaction between the scientific actors and the end users (industry, SME), public-private

*Promote the integration of Jordan into scientific high-level exchanges*

- Reinforce Jordan's participation in the international Marie Curie scholarships; foresee appropriate mechanisms for return
- Reinforce the exchange of personal in the joint projects and promote the participation of Jordanian scientists in international scientific debates

**Morocco**

*Speed up Morocco's integration in the European research area and the Community framework programmes*

- Create and enhance reciprocal information systems.
- Implement and ensure the smooth running of the network of national contact points for the FRDPs and link them up with the national RDT and innovation operators.
- Organise EU-Morocco cooperation in RDT-I, identifying the priority sectors of mutual interest, the instruments and means of cooperation and implementation policies and strategies.

*Develop research and technological development capacity for the benefit of the economy and society*

- Strengthen human, material and institutional resources in order to improve the capacities of RDT-I operators.
- Organise dialogue between all those involved in research and end-users (industry, SMEs).
- Implement interaction mechanisms between research and industry, public-private sector (technology parks, fora, etc.).

*Promote Morocco's integration in high-level scientific exchanges*

- Strengthen Morocco's participation in the international Marie Curie scholarship programmes and provide appropriate return mechanisms.
- Step up staff exchanges in joint projects and promote the participation of Moroccan scientists in international scientific fora and debates.

## **Tunisia**

### *Speed up Tunisia's integration in the European research area and the Community framework programmes*

- Implement and reinforce mutual information systems, in particular as regards reciprocal cooperation opportunities;
- Disseminate research results to all potential users, develop a “patent culture” and set up intellectual property offices in technology parks and universities, including support for the introduction of a doctoral-level course in intellectual property law in the framework of the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation;
- Implement and ensure the smooth running of the network of national contact points for the 6th FRDP and link them up with the national RDT and innovation operators;
- Organise EU-Tunisia cooperation in RDT-I, identifying the priority sectors of mutual interest, the instruments and means of cooperation and implementation policies and strategies.

### *Develop research and technological development capacity for the benefit of the economy and society*

- Strengthen human, material and institutional resources in order to improve the capacities of RDT-I operators;
- Adopt a common strategy for the ten sectoral and regional technology parks with a view to organising a dialogue between all those involved in research and end-users (industry, SMEs) and implementing interaction mechanisms between research and industry, public-private sector;
- Strengthen the human and material resources necessary to promote innovation.

### *Promote Tunisia's integration in high-level scientific exchanges*

- Strengthen Tunisia's participation in the international Marie Curie scholarship programmes and provide appropriate return mechanisms;
- Step up staff exchanges in joint projects and consider other forms of exchange;
- Promote participation of Tunisian scientists in international scientific debates and fora;
- Promote science and technology information through reciprocal access to databases and scientific documentation;
- Encourage integration into European networks of excellence and/or participation in research groups;
- Encourage the establishment of a science and technology observatory as envisaged under the 10th Plan.

## **Palestinian Authority**

### *Science and technology, research and development*

- Evaluate the current situation with regard to research and development (infrastructure, human resources, institutional capacity)
- Promote improved Palestinian participation in the EU Sixth Framework Programme on Research and Development (including the establishment of national contact points)