

Political Science 3480: Environmental Politics Preparations for the Mediterranean exercise, 2009 (April 27 and 29)

For the Mediterranean exercise, you have been assigned a country to represent at a Mediterranean Pollution Conference. You will need to know basic with basic facts about your countries, and you will be able to develop ideas about the interests they have. On Wednesday, April 22, we will have some background on the problems of the Mediterranean Sea. On Monday, April 27 and Wednesday, April 29, you will put this information to work in solving the collective pollution problems of the Mediterranean. You should pay particular attention to current pollution problems and the increased pressures that coastal area development will cause.

Under My Documents on My Gateway, you will have links to a document that includes (1) brief articles about the problems of the Mediterranean Sea. Here is a link the CIA Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>), , where you will be expected to gather basic, very recent data about your country. You will need to know the following information for your country:

(1) **Population**, (2) **GDP per capita**, (3) **Natural Resources** and (4) **Environment – Current Issues**
(3 & 4 are under “Geography”)

This information about the Mediterranean’s problems and your country is fair game for the quiz on April 27. Also remember that participation in this exercise is an important part of your participation grade.

Here are the countries you represent at the talks. You should be faithful to their interests and likely positions during the negotiations.

France:	Iljaz Shehu, Alex Smith, Jillian Knuckles
Spain:	David Reynolds, Sara Ausmus, Trent Simpson
Italy:	Alex Bladen, Shine Sheik, Zirgham Bhatti
Turkey:	Steve Neunuebel, Zaneta Ford,
Croatia:	Stephen Boyd
Bosnia& Hergezovina:	Christopher Riggs
Albania:	Daniel Miner
Greece:	Breanne Wilkinson, Marlon Owens
Syria	Heather Smith, Richard Pelton
Lebanon:	Beau Davenport
Israel	Jim Reiners, Elena Porcelli
Egypt:	Thomas Klein, Jancis Dunn
Morocco:	Helen Klein, Tim Volkert
Algeria:	Craig Robinson, Jillian Knuckles
Tunisia:	Michael Seibel, Jessica Keil
Cyprus:	Haris Lalic
Libya:	Katrina Utz, Louis GuentherSmith
UNEP:	Eli Baskir , Kelly Halbert

GRADING THE EXERCISE:

A = Clear, specific protocol with **timetables** and **targets**; new international **institution** to monitor implementation of the agreement; specific **financial commitments**

B = Convention that outlines a broad, general set of **goals** with an additional **meeting** to draft a protocol schedules; participants largely agree on agenda and facts

C = Additional meeting scheduled; agreement on substantive agenda and many facts

D = Some agreement on agenda, facts

F = No agreement

F- = War breaks out

(Group performance will not affect individual final course grades)

Additional information

Here's a map of the nations bordering the sea:



Thanks to Columbia and Yale Universities, here is a link to an overall environmental performance ranking for most of the world's nations:

http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/epi/papers/2008EPI_rankingsandscores_23Jan08.pdf

For more information on the performance of your country, skim the relevant tables in the full report, at:

<http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/epi/downloads.html>

And here's a link to the UN Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan

World Wildlife Federation: Key Threats in the Mediterranean (January, 2007)

[http://www.panda.org/what we do/where we work/mediterranean/threats/](http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/mediterranean/threats/)

Tourism and population pressure

Of the 220 million tourists who visit the region every year, over 100 million tourists flock to the Mediterranean beaches.

Mass tourism has led to degraded landscapes, soil erosion, increased waste discharges into the sea, loss of natural habitats, higher pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires. It puts a strain on water resources and often leads to cultural disruption.

Mediterranean coastal areas, which account for 30% of international tourist destinations, are already seriously damaged.

Sea pollution

The land-locked waters of the Mediterranean have a very low renewal rate (80 to 90 years) and so are extremely sensitive to pollution. The Mediterranean represents less than 1% of the earth's total marine surface, but oil tanker traffic through this sea accounts for more than 20% of global traffic. Every year 635,000 tonnes of crude oil are spilled by vessels in the Mediterranean Sea .

This is 15 times the amount of the Prestige spill off the coast of Spain. 80% of the urban sewage produced is discharged untreated. Added to that are agricultural runoffs containing pesticides, nitrates and phosphates which contaminate the sea.

Overfishing

Around 1.5 million tons of fish are caught in the Mediterranean each year. Destructive and often illegal fishing methods, including bottom trawlers, dynamite, long lines, and drift nets have depleted fish stocks. Use of drift nets are also responsible for the accidental deaths and incidental catches of whales, dolphins and marine turtles.

Depleted fish stocks are also reflected in the undersized catch. 83% of all blue-fin tuna and swordfish caught in the Mediterranean are undersized.

Forest loss and degradation

Almost 85% of Mediterranean forests have already disappeared. Major threats to forests include fragmentation, road construction, tourism, forest fires, land clearing for agriculture, and overgrazing .

Forest fires

Every year more than 50,000 fires burn an estimated average of 600,000 – 800,000 hectares, an area comparable to the island of Crete or Corsica . Human-induced fires, deliberate or through negligence, account for 95% of Mediterranean forest fires.

Desertification

About 300,000 sq km of land in the European coastal zone of the Mediterranean is undergoing desertification, affecting the livelihood of 16.5 million people. In Tunisia and Spain alone the costs of desertification have been evaluated at \$100 million and \$200 million a year respectively.

Water shortage

Precious groundwater resources in the region are being wasted through inefficient irrigation and drainage schemes. River engineering and dam construction continue to alter river and floodplain systems, resulting in loss of species and habitats. International disputes over water control have already occurred in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East.

Mediterranean Threatened by Development, says Blue Plan Report

Development pressures threaten to overwhelm the Mediterranean by 2025, says Blue Plan report

Study also recommends solutions for minimizing the damage

Geneva, 4 April 2006 – A 400-page report commissioned by the 21 nations bordering the Mediterranean Sea extrapolates from current trends in environment and development to paint a grim picture of the region in the year 2025. But the report also describes an alternative pathway based on the principles of sustainable development that could dramatically boost the quality of life over the coming decades.

“Governments need to recognize that economic and social development requires a healthy natural environment. Tough decisions and trade-offs will have to be made if the Mediterranean is to preserve the natural beauty and quality of life that have made it one of the world’s most attractive locations,” said Mohamed Ennabli, Vice-President of the Blue Plan (Plan Bleu) and Former Minister of Environment and Land Use Management in Tunisia.

The report, “A Sustainable Future for the Mediterranean: the Blue Plan’s Environment & Development Outlook”, was written by some 300 experts assembled under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme’s Athens-based Mediterranean Action Plan. It was funded by the participating countries with special support from the European Commission, France, and the European Environment Agency.

The report concludes that many of the more pessimistic predictions that the first Blue Plan study made in 1989 have come true. Looking ahead now another 20 years, the Blue Plan examines how current baseline trends will affect the Mediterranean Basin by 2025. Among its conclusions:

- By 2025, 524 million people will live in the Mediterranean rim countries, compared to 427 million in the year 2000. Of these, 75% will live in urban areas.
- The population of Mediterranean coastal cities will rise from 70 million in 2000 to 90 million in 2025, and 312 million tourists will visit the coastal areas every year versus 175 million in 2000.
- Coastal areas will become increasingly saturated by development. In addition to new harbors, roads and airports, the coastline of 2025 is expected to host 360 coastal power plants (compared to 200 in 2000), several dozen new refineries, and perhaps 175 new desalination plants. Altogether, the conversion of an additional 4,000 km of coastline will result in 50% of the Sea’s 46,000 km-coastline being built-up by 2025.
- The demand for freshwater will continue to increase, particularly on the southern and eastern shores. By 2025, some 63 million people in the Mediterranean will have access to less than 500 m³ per capita per year (which has been defined as the “shortage” threshold). Because options for increasing the supply of water are reaching their limits, the focus must be on managing the demand for water. If properly implemented, this could lead to savings of nearly 54 km³ of water, or 24% of the total demand projected for 2025 under the baseline scenario (estimated at 210 km³ for the Mediterranean Basin), and stabilize water demand near 2000 levels.
- The demand for primary commercial energy more than doubled in the Mediterranean Basin from 1970 to 2000. Between 2000 and 2025, this demand could rise by another 65%. By exploiting the technologies currently available, however, the region could save 208 Mtoe (million tonnes oil equivalent) per year by 2025, about half of the projected growth in demand from 2000 to 2025. It could also ensure that renewable energy sources (geothermal, solar, wind, hydraulic) will grow to represent 14% of primary energy use by 2025, instead of the 4% expected under the baseline scenario.
- Road traffic continues to grow by some 2.7% per year on the northern rim of the Sea and 3.4% in the south. By 2025 this will cause a two-fold increase in passenger traffic and a 2.6-fold increase in freight traffic.
- Maritime freight may continue to grow faster than the overall economy, especially due to increased transit traffic (5.6% per year between 2000 and 2025, resulting in nearly a four-fold increase). While operational pollution from hydrocarbons should decrease, discharges of bilge water and chemical products as well as the risks of oil spills and other polluting accidents are growing significantly.
- In the South, it will be increasingly difficult to manage the volumes of waste produced (587 kg per person per year in 2025 versus 282 in 2000). In the North, waste volumes are expected to reach one 1,000 kg per person per year in 2025 versus 566 kg in 2000.
- Desertification in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean will worsen the social and environmental damage, exacerbating rural poverty, biodiversity loss and the degradation of water resources. The high rate of siltation that has been experienced by dams suggests that the 21st century will be the “post-dam era”.
- An additional 1.5 million hectares or more of top-quality agricultural land will be lost to urbanization and infrastructure development over the next 20 years.

- Other current threats to the Sea itself include the discharge of urban waste water – some 60% of which is untreated – into the Mediterranean, a doubling of nitrates over the past 20 years, a 90% decline in natural sediment reaching the Sea over the past 50 years (leading to coastal erosion), the introduction of some 500 alien species (some of which, for example *Caulerpa* seaweed, cause enormous economic and ecological damage), and the endangered status of 104 native species, including the monk seal and marine turtles.

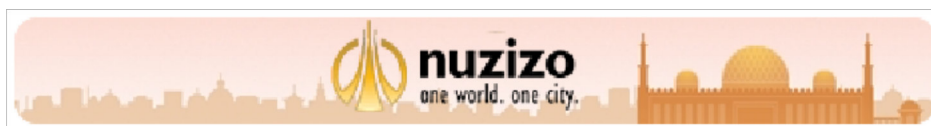
The report urges the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the member states of the 1975 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean to strengthen their Mediterranean policies. It calls for a new regional protocol to the Convention containing stronger measures, for greater private and public financing to reduce pollution in the region, and the development of better demand-management and local sustainable-development policies. It also recommends efforts to mobilize all stakeholders for policies and projects that integrate environment and development.

Note to journalists: For more information, please contact Michael Williams at +41-22-917-8242, +41-79-4091528 (cell), or michael.williams@unep.ch See also <http://www.planbleu.org/actualite/uk/aveniDurableMediterranee.html>.



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Saturday, April 04, 2009

Mediterranean pollution remains largely ignored

Lebanon among biggest polluters

By Dalila Mahdawi

Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: Despite linking 21 countries and attracting a third of the world's annual tourism, the problems of pollution and overfishing in the Mediterranean Sea have remained largely overlooked, with environmentalists in Lebanon saying their government has not shown sufficient commitment to protecting the body of water.

Campaigners have long called for policies to combat pollution in the Mediterranean, but it was only after Israel's bombing of Lebanon's Jiyeh power station during a 34-day conflict in 2006, which released 15,000 tons of unrefined fuel oil into the sea, that major efforts to clean up Lebanon's coastline began.

The oil spill, often referred to as Lebanon's biggest environmental disaster, affected approximately 150 kilometers of coastline, as well as Syria and Cyprus. But rather than sparking a sustained clean-up effort, the burdens of the Mediterranean were quickly forgotten again, campaigners say.

Decades of unsustainable coastal urbanization and unregulated dumping of untreated domestic and industrial waste have transformed the Mediterranean into one of the world's most polluted seas.

Some 57 percent of Lebanon's sewage water is "directly disposed of on the shores without any treatment whatsoever," the country's Green Party has said, noting some 28 industries also dumped their waste into the sea without treatment. It is unclear how accurate the figures are, however, as no national water management body exists.

"Lebanon is one of a few countries where nearly all sewage goes into the sea," said Ali Darwish, general secretary of environmental organization Greenline. An average Lebanese citizen consumes 80-100 liters of water every day, he said, meaning some 200,000 cubic meters of untreated sewage water found its way into the Mediterranean daily. These levels lead "the Center of Water Resources to consider the level of pollution of most beaches to be above the permissible level set by the World Health Organization," Greenpeace Lebanon has noted.

Aside from sewage, dumpsites dotting Lebanon's coastline also contribute to the Mediterranean's woes. The most notorious of these is the Sidon dump, which regularly collapses, sending tons of plastic bags and hospital and animal waste into the water. "Addressing the problems associated with dumpsites, and providing suitable alternatives through an integrated waste management strategy, including a network of sanitary landfill sites, waste recycling and composting, should clearly be a national priority," a 2007 UN Environment Program report, "Lebanon post-conflict Assessment," remarked.

Pollution also placed a burden on the national coffers. A 2005 report by the World Bank found pollution and degradation of Lebanon's coastlines and natural resources cost the country about \$565 million every year. But according to Darwish, "the governments of Lebanon, since 1991, have rejected civil-society efforts to initiate plans to construct sewage treatment facilities" along the coast. "Lebanon has laws ensuring a minimum protection of the environment, so the government is clearly not fulfilling its duties."

Lebanon is party to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution, which strives to eliminate land-based pollution sources and establish marine reserves, as well as the Convention for Biological Diversity, which stipulates that "marine and coastal protected areas should be part of a wider marine and coastal management framework."

However, little attention has been paid to the conventions. The country only has one marine reserve, instigated not by the government, but Greenpeace.

The reserve, a pilot project in Byblos, was initiated after extensive consultation with the local municipality and fishermen, said Greenpeace Lebanon's Ocean campaigner, Yasmin al-Helwe.

No fishing or dumping is allowed in the area: only swimming, environmentally friendly boating and diving. The reserve, encompassing 1.2 kilometers of sea, provides a clean and safe haven for fish to reproduce. Marine reserves are especially important at a time when over-fishing threatens to kill off hundreds of marine species, Helwe, said.

"If you talk to fishermen, they say that a decade ago, they would catch tons of fish." Today fishermen are lucky to catch even a fraction of that, she said, forcing many fishermen to employ destructive fishing techniques like dynamiting. The project has met with enthusiasm from the area's fishermen, who are keen to safeguard their livelihoods.

But a marine reserve had to be preceded by proper enforcement of environmental laws and the introduction of a national fresh and waste-water management strategy, said Darwish.

"What's the use [of marine reserves] when you have untreated and chemical waste being pumped into them?" he asked.

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Italy's Environmental Minister Rails Against Worsening Mediterranean Pollution; 'A Lot of Talk and Little Action'

Underwatertimes.com News Service

November 20, 2006 18:53 EST

CAIRO, Egypt -- Italy's environment minister, Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio on Monday said that pollution in the Mediterranean has worsened over the past 30 years and blamed the situation on inaction. "The truth is that in the Mediterranean, there is a lot of talk and little action... it cannot become a dumping ground," said Pecoraro Scanio. He and 20 other environment ministers from the European Union and the 12 countries of the Mediterranean basin were gathered in the Egyptian capital to review environmental progress in the region. It is the first time the Euromediterranean ministerial conference - now in its third year - has been held in one of the southern Mediterranean states.

"In thirty years, care of the Mare Nostrum (the Latin name for the Mediterranean) has not improved but on the contrary has worsened. And there is little awareness of the impact with regard to the populations who live on its shores. Much of fish we eat comes from the Mediterranean, so if we pollute it, we are polluting ourselves," Pecoraro Scanio said.

Mercury levels in fish in the Mediterranean are 20 times the maximum levels recommended by the UN World Health Organisation (WHO), while human intake of polycyclic hydrocarbons - derived chiefly from petroleum and coal tar - are 100 times permissible levels, according to the UN's environment agency UNEP's anti-pollution programme for the region, MEDPOL.

Mercury and other heavy metals enter humans via the food chain and can cause damage to the central nervous, endocrine and reproductive systems, as well as heart disease and an increase in cancer rates.

Pecoraro Scanio stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation, citing seven programmes underway between Italy and Egypt - which he described as "a strategically important country in the region." Four of these relate to renewable or clean energy, while another is centred on the distribution of water resources to a village in the upper Sinai with a population of 10,000.

"There are projects concerned with boosting solar power to meet the energy needs of a very populous country that signed up to the United Nations Kyoto Protocol [to cut greenhouse gas emissions] and whose economy is based on tourism," said Pecoraro Scanio.

He criticised the media for failing to raise awareness of long-term environmental issues in the region, such as increasing salinity in the eastern Mediterranean, or the rising temperature of seawater, for example in the Strait of Messina in southern Italy, which reached 29 C this summer.

We only need to remember that in Italy, while there have been numerous studies of individual phenomena or events, no comprehensive study of the state of health of the Mediterranean Sea has been carried out.

There is much we don't know, and for this reason, I have sought funding for such an in-depth survey in Italy's 2007 budget," he stated.

At the conference, the 21 environment ministers presented a dossier entitled "The Seven Capital Crimes of Industry'. Oil companies, the heavy metals, chemicals and fertilisers industries, are fingered by the dossier as the worst polluters of the Mediterranean, as they produce real poisons that jeopardise the environment and human health.

"We have a shared obligation and problem, which the media should do more to highlight and help prevent the Mediterranean from becoming a polluted and eutrophic sea like the Baltic," Pecoraro Scanio concluded, adding that a goal is to reverse by 2020 the current trend towards increasing pollution in the Mediterranean.

Close Window

Brussels, 10 April 2008

Helping protect the Mediterranean Sea from pollution

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank today are presenting the results of a study on potential investments addressing pollution hotspots in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. The study, undertaken as part of the Commission's Horizon 2020 Initiative designed to tackle the major sources of Mediterranean pollution by the year 2020, recognises the need for a programme to help the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean reduce the pollution they release into the sea. The decline of the Mediterranean threatens the health of the 143 million people living on its shore and jeopardises the long-term development of key economic sectors such as fishing and tourism. The proposed Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP) and the Horizon 2020 initiative are part of the European Union's cooperation with the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries involved in the Barcelona Process and covered by the EU's Neighbourhood Policy.

European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "It is imperative that the European Union work with its Mediterranean neighbours to safeguard the environment of one of the world's major seas. We must all cooperate to provide the appropriate resources to reserve the degradation of the Mediterranean."

European Investment Bank Vice President Philippe de Fontaine Vive who is in charge of FEMIP said: "The Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP) is an important starting point for a joint effort of international and bilateral financing institutions in order to implement the pollution reduction component of the Horizon 2020 initiative. To this end, FEMIP is ready to take action in order to support Mediterranean partner countries with the necessary financial investments."

A worsening Mediterranean environment

The Mediterranean Sea is home to more than 400 million people spread across 22 countries, of which 143 million people live on the coast, and about another 175 million visit the region each year. The well being of all these people depends on the health of the environment of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Mediterranean environment is one of the richest and at the same time one of the most vulnerable in the world as its marine and coastal environments are exposed to a combination of pressures, 80% of which come from land-based pollution.

More than half of urban areas on the Mediterranean with a population over 100,000 do not have waste water treatment plants and 60% of the wastewater produced in these areas is directly discharged into the sea. More than 80% of landfills in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are not monitored. The marine environment of the Mediterranean is especially exposed to agricultural waste, airborne particles and river run-off, which carries pathogens, heavy metals, organic pollutants, oils and radioactive substances into the sea.

Rapid urbanisation coupled with increasing and unsustainable development of tourism in the Mediterranean Sea's coast has contributed to significant environmental and health problems. Pollution from industry, shipping and households, the loss of open areas, and the destruction of coastal ecosystems for construction projects are also taking their toll.

The Mediterranean Hot Spots Investment Programme

In November 2006 a timetable of action for the Horizon 2020 Initiative was launched. One of these actions called on the European Investment Bank or World Bank to work with donor countries to identify projects which are having the largest impact on Mediterranean pollution levels - upstream and downstream pollution - across the Mediterranean Region.

The study presented today is the result of this effort.

The identification of priority hotspots investments were conducted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) in cooperation with the United Nation's Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). The activities of the MeHSIP will primarily focus on providing support to the Horizon 2020 initiative and partner countries in implementing priority pollution reduction investment projects.

The EIB will now proceed in finalising a list of projects under the Mediterranean Hotspot Investment Programme based on the 44 projects already identified in seven Mediterranean countries. Among the criteria for determining the potential investment in projects are the projects' importance for the country or the Mediterranean region, how significantly they reduce pollution, the sustainability of the operations, and the loan repayment capacity of the projects' promoters and the amounts required from donors.

The MeHSIP will also contribute to closer collaboration between the European Investment Bank and other donors and initiatives in the region designed to integrate the environment in different sector policies in the Mediterranean.

Background: the Horizon 2020 initiative

Horizon 2020 is a central part of the European Union's policy to tackle environmental problems in the Mediterranean. The initiative aims to address many of the inadequacies of past efforts to protect the Mediterranean by financing projects to reduce the most significant sources of pollution, support the creation or reinforcement of national environmental authorities, promote research on Mediterranean environmental issues, and develop indicators to monitor the success of the initiative.

For more information:

The Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP):

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/pdf/mehsip_report.pdf

The Commission's Horizon 2020 webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/horizon_2020_en.htm