

**THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2013 AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
(BRUSSELS)**

**“Developing and managing coastal and maritime areas, framework  
conditions for blue growth in the Mediterranean”**

**What partnership with the Mediterranean Regions?**

**Address by the President of LARNAKA DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY (ANETEL), Mr Louis Koumenides**

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Distinguished Political Representatives, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear partners,

Coastal and marine environments are the most threatened and most valuable, since they have vital importance for our well-being and the well-being of future generations. Marine ecosystems play a complex and critical role in supporting economic prosperity and social welfare, while they provide multiple ecosystem services that are essential for life. Nowadays, marine ecosystems are threatened by land-based sources of pollution, habitat degradation, overexploitation of fishery stocks, oil pollution, and climate change.

Marine ecosystems in the Mediterranean, a semi-enclosed sea, have for long been submitted to considerable stress as a result of human activity. The Mediterranean is particularly vulnerable to maritime associated impacts, such as oil spill pollution, due to the crossing by thousands of oil tankers, transporting crude oil from the Middle East to many coastal installations in Europe and North America.

Due to this vulnerability to pollution, the Mediterranean countries must be aware, well organized and prepared for operational and response to accidental marine pollution, particularly with the assistance of REMPEC, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre, for the Mediterranean Sea. The most crucial response to an oil spill depends on a reliable national system for preparedness and effective response. To successfully combat an oil spill we need highly-trained personnel and relevant equipment such as vessels, chemical sprays, booms, skimmers and most importantly contingency plans for oil pollution combating.

Cyprus is situated in the Eastern Mediterranean (east of Greece, south of Turkey, west of Syria, Lebanon, northwest of Israel and north of Egypt. Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea at the cross roads of three continents. In this special geographical context Cyprus has a vital role to play. The latest wars and unstable political situation of its neighboring countries can affect the environment in Cyprus negatively, as well as Mediterranean regions. The environmental and health impacts produced by the war increases as more oil washes ashore or solidifies sinks to the bottom of the sea and move to the coast, can be disastrous and create domino effects.

In relation to the aforementioned case and MAREMED project, Larnaca District Development Agency (ANETEL) was the main coordinator of the exercise, covering 3 days event on **“fight against oil spill pollution”** on 9/10/11 of October 2012 in Larnaca during the Cypriot EU Presidency, under this project. Great experience gained throughout the seminar in alignment with the exercise as they were formulated:

1. Pollution control and compensation for environmental damage

2. "Introduction to the anti-pollution practical exercises" presented by CEDRE about the pollution control training session and a land based antipollution simulation practical exercises took place on Voroklini beach, near Larnaca, the days after, on the 10 and 11 of October. Local Stakeholders for Cyprus, Civil servants and partners of the Maremed Project, participated to the exercise.

What we gain from this experience is that there is a strong maritime dimension of a macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean or its sub spaces. In this context, the relationship is strong among pollution control, the role of Regions and the future of macro-regional strategies.

Furthermore, in particular the needs of local and regional authorities in terms of tackling pollution, and how their action can be coordinated with that led by the States and European institutions.

The coordination of these micro-regional strategies would enable the implementation of an overall policy for the whole Mediterranean basin in synergy with the priorities of regional and international organizations. The main conclusion that came up it was the importance of having a common terminology in terms of material, equipment, devices and actions and it was also highlighted in order to better reinforce the quality of the response and the efficiency of the staff.

Before concluding, I would like to stress out the necessity to focus on the needs of the terrestrial component of the fight against a pollution in terms of preparation; the importance of allowing mutual assistance between Mediterranean territories by organizing simulation exercises on logical areas for

the distribution of pollution in the Mediterranean zones like Adriatic, north-western Mediterranean, Aegean sea, Gibraltar Detroit, the zone of "Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria etc". We are expecting that all those expertise during MAREMED project will be capitalized into a fruitful path of cooperation of Mediterranean regions for the next financial European programming period.

Thanks once more for your invitation and remaining open to our future fruitful cooperation.