

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON WATER
JORDAN, October 29, 2008

Intervention from Croatia – Mr COBANKOVIC

Dear Hosts, distinguished Chairperson and Co-chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen!

First let me thank you for your invitation and warm welcome, and express my great support to this joint initiative for protection of the Mediterranean. We are pleased that the cooperation “Union for the Mediterranean” in the framework of the Barcelona process extended to all Mediterranean coastal countries, including the Adriatic Sea countries, which Croatia has been advocating for some time.

Due to its geographic location and cultural and historic heritage, Croatia thinks of “Mediterraneanism” as an important component of its identity and expresses a continuing interest in its active Mediterranean involvement.

We believe that the Mediterranean, due to its strategic importance in the political and economic sense and in view of new global challenges, deserves a prominent position among the priorities of both European and global politics.

Allow me a few words now about activities Croatia is implementing with the aim to protect the Adriatic Sea, and thus the Mediterranean itself.

Croatia has, from its independence until the present day, signed numerous international treaties, agreements and conventions, and also enacted its own laws which regulate its approach to the Adriatic Sea.

Accordingly, I would like to point out active participation of the Republic of Croatia in international bodies such as the Adriatic-Ionic Initiative or Slovenian-Croatian-Italian Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea and Coastal areas (which we hope will soon expand to include other Adriatic Sea countries).

I also welcome the establishment of the Regional Forum for the Ballast Water Management in the Mediterranean, which held its first meeting in Dubrovnik within the framework of the REMPEC, whose main goal is to define the Strategy for Ballast Water Management for the entire Mediterranean.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of traffic connections in the region and, in view of this, we encourage the development of short sea shipping. We have also recently joined the European "Marco Polo" programme.

Specific projects

Activities implemented by Croatia are carried out both on the national and a wider, regional level.

The Coastal Cities Pollution Control Project is a national project, which has been implemented since 2005, with the purpose of improving the quality of the coastal waters and the sea in the Croatian Adriatic as a sub-region of the Mediterranean and complying with the EU standards which relate to environmental quality in local communities.

We are also expecting the start of activities on the drafting of the regional project **"Preservation and Sustainable Use of Karst Aquifer Systems"**, which will be jointly prepared by Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania and Greece. The purpose of this project is the exploration of the karst aquifer which stretches along the Adriatic from Slovenia down to Greece.

The Republic of Croatia is aware of the difficult situation concerning the water supplies in the Mediterranean region. Although our country has abundant water resources, in recent years it has been facing the problem of draughts, same as the other counties in the region. One of the measures of the Government of the Republic of Croatia is the implementation of the **National Project of Irrigation and Land and Water Management in the Republic of Croatia.**

In the course of accession process to the European Union and through implementation of the directives of the European Commission related to water protection and water management, numerous new instruments are introduced in water management, while valuable national experience is simultaneously applied.

And finally, I would like to stress out our strong belief and readiness to contribute, by means of our knowledge and a 130-year long experience in organized water management as well as through the adoption of the EU policies, to further strengthening of the cooperation, both in our Adriatic region and beyond, in the entire area of the Mediterranean.

Thank you very much!