

Summary



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1. The First Mediterranean Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production highlights the importance of changing how we consume

The First Mediterranean Round Table on Sustainable Consumption and Production was held in Barcelona on the 5, 6 and 7 of November in an event organised by the CP/RAC which attracted more than 150 people from the entire Mediterranean Basin. This event was held in the *Escuela Superior de Comercio Internacional (ESCI)* business school in Barcelona and brought together almost 30 different nationalities, including representatives from governments, international organisations, industrial associations, international companies, academic and research institutions, consumer associations and NGOs. During the three days of the roundtable, sustainable consumption and production

was looked at from various viewpoints: the private sector and civil society in their role related to changes towards more sustainable models, reduction in resource consumption, companies' green competitiveness, eco-design and eco-labelling, the public sector, green urban development, the relationship with climate change, environmental education and raising the awareness of society at large.

Innovative structure

Eduard Pallejà, Secretary General of the Department of the Environment and Housing in the Catalan autonomous government, began the sessions with Jordi



Renom, Director of the Catalan Waste Agency and Virginia Alzina, Director of the RAC/CP. The three highlighted the need to urgently alter current production and consumption patterns and achieve more sustainable models.

The roundtable was different to other sessions due to both its informative and participative nature. Over two separate days, participants were divided into four working groups to deal with different sustainable consumption and production issues. After more than two hours working together, the groups reached joint conclusions in a plenary session which were summarised later in a general document on conclusions by the Roundtable. These conclusions and recommendations were the main output of the event, since they were provided by experts and representatives from the public and private sector and civil society in order to identify priorities, challenges and opportunities for introducing sustainable consumption and production in the region.

Apart from these working groups, the meeting was also divided into themed panels with various prestigious speakers. These included Glen Peters, one of the world's leading experts on climate change and the analysis of CO2 emissions from a consumption point of view. Also remarkable was the presentation by the expert on reducing resource consumption and creator of the "performance economy" concept, Walter Stahel, who proposed, amongst other things, the transformation of the industry into service companies to achieve longer lasting goods. Other notable guests included Michael Kuhndt, one of the main European experts on sustainable consumption and production, a United Nations consultant and industry decision-making expert according to environmental criteria. Also involved in the sessions was Herbert Aichinger, who leads the European Commission's efforts on sustainable consumption and production.

Virginia Alzina, centre director, highlighted that the need to radically change our consumption and production habits is the "*inconvenient truth of the next few years*", commenting that "*if we do not change our current consumption and production patterns, by 2100 we will need the resources of 4 planets like ours*".



In Alzina's opinion, governments must promote sustainable consumption and production strategies with instruments such as eco-labelling, eco-efficiency and eco-design, as well as introduce policies and changes in regulation. What is required in the private sector is "*a change in the behaviour of producers, transforming the current production chain into a green and sustainable chain*". Virginia Alzina assures that the CP/RAC will work towards sustainable consumption and production becoming a priority for the United Nations' Mediterranean Action Plan and will continue its research work, promotion of initiatives and creation of work networks in the Mediterranean.

Origins

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) recognised that changing consumption and production patterns is one of the world's most important objectives and an imperative need. For that purpose, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation established the development of a ten-year programme framework for supporting and carrying out regional and national initiatives that would accelerate change towards sustainable consumption and production. This led to the United Nations' so-called Marrakesh Process, which promotes and enables the preparation of national sustainable production and consumption programmes and strategies.

The Marrakesh Process holds meetings internationally and regionally to achieve the targets set. It recognises particularly the special importance of regional meetings for identifying regional priorities and fields of action. The CP/RAC has been involved in this process through its natural area of activity and, in this context, the centre organised the First Mediterranean Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which identified sustainable consumption and production needs and priorities for the Mediterranean. This meeting was especially significant, since up until that point no regional meeting of the Marrakesh Process had been held in the Mediterranean. It also represented an important milestone for the centre, which established itself as the promoter of the UNEP's Marrakesh Process. ■

2. GRECO Initiative launches its new image at a workshop on Green Competitiveness

Green competitiveness now has its own name. The “GRECO Initiative, finding business opportunities through Cleaner Production” workshop, organised by the RAC/CP, was held on the 5 of November in Barcelona. The event attracted around 30 participants from National Clean Production Centres and focal points from the UMCE-BusinessMed Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises. They all showed great interest in the initiative, offering the viewpoint of southern and middle eastern Mediterranean countries, absolutely necessary for the project’s success.

The GRECO Initiative, Finding business opportunities through Cleaner Production workshop took place on the 5 of November, 2008 prior to the First Mediterranean Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption. Held in the *Escuela Superior de Comercio Internacional* (ESCI) business school in Barcelona, the seminar gathered around 30 participants from France, Slovenia, Malta, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Cyprus, Egypt, Croatia, Algeria, Tunisia and Spain. Most of those present formed part of the UMCE-BusinessMed Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises and also Clean Production Centres from each of the countries.

The most remarkable conclusions reached during the session were the importance of addressing companies in essentially business terms and the need to adapt to the characteristics of each country and company. The importance of helping companies find a means of financing, but always

counting on their direct involvement, was also highlighted. All the participants commented on the need to share experiences and knowledge in general, creating synergies and avoiding the duplication of efforts.

Active participation

Virgínia Alzina, CP/RAC director, opened the seminar by encouraging participants to adopt the GRECO Initiative as a way of achieving cleaner production in the Mediterranean and, consequently, a more sustainable goods and services market. Luisa García-Valdecasas, head of the GRECO Initiative, gave an exhaustive presentation of the project, emphasising its advantages, activities carried out and those forecast. All the participants then had an opportunity to give their impressions of the project, which were very positive and focused on the innovative fact that the GRECO Initiative addresses companies in terms of economic profitability and not just in terms of the environment.



The BusinessMed Focal Points explained the challenges and opportunities that the GRECO Initiative may come across in each of the countries. The National Cleaner Production Centres, for their part, contributed the measures to be used to support SMEs in adopting Best Environmental Practices (BAPs) and Best Available Techniques (BATs). The general impressions of both groups were extremely positive, showing interest in implementing the project in their countries. The GRECO Initiative will be presented in Morocco at the end of February at its first international congress.

About the GRECO Initiative

The GRECO Initiative is a project launched by the CP/RAC designed for SMEs throughout the Mediterranean to disseminate the idea that cleaner production provides both environmental and economic benefits. The GRECO Initiative is based on the work carried out by the centre on cleaner production over the last 12 years, compiled in the 100 MedClean records.

The RAC/CP strongly promoted the GRECO Initiative during the second half of 2008, registering it as a brand and providing it with its own image. GRECO Initiative actions are based on a five-year work plan, with this workshop as its first official event. ■



3. The collection and treatment of used lubricating oils is discussed at a workshop in Barcelona



The CP/RAC organised the “Mediterranean Workshop on used lubricating oils: collection and treatment” seminar in November. This three-day meeting was attended by 22 experts from different Mediterranean countries who stressed the importance that regulations adapt to the reality in each country.

The “Mediterranean Workshop on used lubricating oils: collection and treatment” seminar, organised by the CP/RAC, was held in Barcelona on the 3, 4 and 5 of November. The background to this event was determined by a series of workshops held in Lebanon and Cyprus last March on the “Reduction of Pollutant Emissions in Urban Activities”, resulting in a proposal to hold a seminar in Barcelona on used oil collection and treatment. Experts were therefore invited from both the public and private sectors in Greece, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, Italy and Cyprus, as well as a representative from the Basel Convention Regional Centre. A total of 22 experts met and exchanged experiences and information on the collection, treatment and management of used oils, attempting to identify possible interregional cooperation projects in this field.

Programme

The seminar was opened on the 3 of November in the Catalan Waste Agency premises by Virginia Alzina, CP/RAC Director. This initial session was set aside for the presentation of the Catalan experience and generating a debate amongst participants, who showed interest in the methods for achieving effective control within the current legal framework and also in covering collection and treatment costs.

On the morning of the 4 of November there was a presentation of the current situation in each country by the respective representatives. It was concluded that market size is similar in all the participating countries, apart from Italy, where oil production is at least five times greater than the others. After this session, the seminar continued with practical visits.

On the 4 of November, all seminar participants went on a technical visit to ECOIMSA, a MARPOL (marine pollution) treatment plant located in the port of Barcelona. The following day they went on another visit to the Catalan Residual Oil Treatment Plant (CATOR), a private company that provides complete management of used lubricating oils in Alcover (Tarragona). ■



4. A training video adds the finishing touch to the waste management for the olive oil industry project

Started in 2005, the project has analysed the olive oil industry situation in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan over the past three years and provided conclusions and recommendations through seminars and an information video for companies.



Over the last three years, the CP/RAC has been collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme and Ministry of the Environment in Lebanon in carrying out the “Integrated Waste Management for the olive oil pressing industry in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan” project, which began in 2005 and finished in 2008, with the release of the “Good Practices. Good Environment. Good Olive Oil” video. The project has counted on the financial support of the European Commission’s SMAP-II project and been carried out in close collaboration with the Environment Ministries in Syria and Jordan.

Evolution

During an initial work phase, the contribution of the CP/RAC consisted in providing two experts on Cleaner Production and treating olive oil production waste. These experts

conducted a detailed analysis of the situation of the vegetable oil industry in countries covered by the project, working closely with CARTIF, a company with extensive experience in olive oil waste treatment. While performing their mission, the experts travelled to the three countries to compile information on olive oil, the secondary industry of extraction and soap factories, and observed in situ the environmental problems caused by these industries. Their mission was to implement the relevant recommendations, which differ from one country to another according to the development stage of the olive oil industry in each country.

The experts also took part in three national workshops in Lebanon designed for factory owners and organised by the CP/RAC. One of the main recommendations arising from this work was to develop complete treatment plants for the management

and recovery of waste generated during the olive oil production process, focusing on recovering the maximum amount of source water and obtaining subproducts.

Audiovisual media

The CP/RAC is aware of the little time industries have in general to consult extensive studies. That is why a video was produced that explains the project’s development, plus its conclusions and recommendations. The result is an audiovisual production of around 45 minutes, with an attractive, easy to follow design, which takes a look at the current situation of the olive oil industry in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan and offers key advice for sustainable development.

The “Good Practices. Good Environment. Good Olive Oil” video was released in October and is available in English and Arabic on request. ■



5. The RAC/CP provides tools to promote Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Syria

During the week of the 17 of November, 2008, the RAC/CP organised two workshops in Syria, one on Eco- Labelling and the other on Cleaner Production. The first, designed for the textile industry, aimed to promote the use of eco-labels in this country. The second was for universities, due to the importance of the academic sector in introducing changes in industry.

The CP/RAC aims to analyse which tools are currently available for promoting sustainable consumption and production from a product point of view to help consumers choose products made with under sustainable criteria. With this in mind, a seminar for promoting eco-labelling in this country's textile industry was organised, in line with the request of the Syria focal point and by mutual consent with MEDPOL.



The workshop “Promoting Eco-Labelling for the Textile Industry in Syria” was held on the 19 and 20 of November in Damascus, with the objective of communicating the advantages of eco-labelling for this country's textile industry. The seminar's 50 participants were explained the nature and advantages of eco-labelling, showing it as a competitive and useful tool for implementing cleaner production systems in textile companies. For manufacturers, it is also a useful marketing tool when exporting their products to the EC.

The seminar looked at both European eco-labelling systems and the GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) system, belonging to the private sector. A debate was then held amongst participants on possible ways of introducing the method in Syria, leading to the suggestion of helping two Syrian companies obtain an eco-label in collaboration with UNEP-DTIE and the Syrian Cleaner Production Centre. In this context, there was a presentation of an in-depth study carried out in 2008 to find out the situation of the textile industry and its legal framework to obtain information on how to help textile exports to Europe.

The seminar's methodology consisted of dividing participants into five groups to consider a specific eco-labelling application case in Syria, analysing weaknesses and barriers and proposing solutions and next steps to be implemented, using their knowledge of the Syrian system.

Seminar for academic sector

The “Cleaner Production (CP) seminar: a tool for green competitiveness in the Syrian industry”, organised by the CP/RAC in collaboration with MEDPOL and the Syrian Cleaner Production Centre, was held in Syria on the 17 and 18 of November. The seminar, which was for university staff, dealt with the introduction of Cleaner Production into university programmes.

The event included 40 participants from three different universities and the Syrian Environment Ministry. It was notable for its use of innovative teaching methodology consisting of games and participative activities instead of conventional talks. Due to the positive responses of everybody who took part in the sessions, it was established that the methods used achieved far more effective results than the classic conference system.

The seminar “Cleaner Production: a tool for green competitiveness in the Syrian industry” concluded with the recommendation to the CP/RAC to translate its interactive Cleaner Production course into Arabic, so that the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Egypt was contacted. The workshop also ended with the promise to provide an incentive for the first of the three universities to incorporate the Cleaner Production concept. ■

6. Expert Workshop on Consumption and Climate Change

Last 4th November 2008 the CP/RAC organized, with the support of the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC), a Workshop on “*Consumption and Climate Change: Methodological challenges and strategic opportunities of the consumption-based approach to greenhouse gas emissions in the Mediterranean*”.

The workshop was held in the UPC premises (Barcelona) and joined a group of international experts and representatives from governments and institutions, including the OECD, the European Environment Agency, the BP/RAC, and the Catalan Government.



The key aim of the workshop was to exchange information about the CP/RAC preliminary studies on the GHG emissions from consumption in the Mediterranean, and also to get technical and strategic feedback to further promote the consumption-based approach to GHG emissions. In this sense, the CP/RAC report on the Spanish Carbon Footprint (which has been recently published) was presented, discussed, and very positively evaluated by the experts. From the technical and methodological point of view, several areas of future research were also identified, such as the need to address GHG emissions from international

transportation, tourism, and land-use changes.

Key opportunities related with the consumption-based accounting of GHG emissions were also identified, such as the important role of this approach for international policy on climate change, particularly in relation to participation of developing countries. The consumption-based approach can also help in the design of strategies on sustainable consumption and production, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation policies at the national, regional and local levels.

However, participants pointed out some barriers that will need to be faced to implement this approach, in particular the lack of comprehensive data and case studies.



To overcome these barriers, a set of recommendations were finally proposed and agreed, which include the development of a common language, a communication strategy, and the need to raise this issue in international climate policy dialogues. In the Mediterranean region, the need to improve the availability of data, and the importance of considering the tourism sector and to account for land-use changes was also highlighted.

Finally, a network of experts and institutions who are already working on this topic was also proposed in order to seek synergies and further promote the consumption-based approach to GHG emissions. ■