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## 1.2. COP-15 makes a climate change commitment through the Almeria Declaration

The Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This alarming statement was clear to all at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP-15), where delegates assessed the effects of climate change expected in the near future if current consumption and pollution trends continue.

After different countries from the Mediterranean basin had shared their impressions regarding the situation, they all agreed to issue a statement saying that climate change is a real problem with drastic effects foreseeable at all levels. It was stated that mitigation policies urgently need to be adopted, regarding both emissions of greenhouse gases and improved resource management, especially with regard to water. The 21 Mediterranean countries gathered together thus passed the Almeria Declaration, which highlighted the threat and the fragility of life around the Mediterranean Sea due to climate change.

This document describes the real environmental situation the Mediterranean is in, contains the warnings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and takes into account the recommendations of the International Solidarity Conference on Climate Change Strategies for African and Mediterranean Regions, not forgetting the obligations undertaken in the Barcelona Convention. The Almeria Declaration is thus a framework for putting national action plans in place to slow the economic, social and environmental impact of pollution and the foreseeable rise in the sea level.



The document also mentions the need to increase the number of protected areas and for Mediterranean countries to collaborate more closely to hold back urban sprawl, overfishing and the effects of global warming. It also stated that it was necessary to encourage the use of renewable energies.

The Spanish Minister for the Environment, Cristina Narbona, expressed satisfaction at having reached a unanimous agreement, saying she hoped that “the Almeria Declaration [was] a true commitment to strengthening protection in the Mediterranean as an essential condition for the development of its peoples and to guarantee progress and coexistence with quality of life”. ■

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## 1.3. GRECO finds its place in COP XV

The GRECO initiative, a programme concerning green competitiveness and eco-efficiency launched by RAC/CP in 2007, was the subject of a talk during the 15th ordinary meeting of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. The event is part of the activities RAC/CP carries out to promote green competitiveness in production companies by implementing efficient clean production mechanisms.

After a brief introduction by Jaime Alejandro, the Director-General for Environmental Quality and Assessment at the Spanish Ministry of the Environment, the director of RAC/CP, Virginia Alzina, presented the GRECO initiative.

The new approach sets out the need to reduce environmental pollution while maintaining the possibility of creating value and increasing companies' profits. The new eco-management vision is intended to improve the efficiency with which natural resources are used, improving social conditions as well as profitability and growth in production.

The guest speakers then showcased some of the 100 case studies published by the RAC/CP. Ali Yaacoub, director of the Lebanon Cleaner Production Centre and Hanan Hanzaz, deputy director of the Morocco Cleaner Production Centre presented two cases on the prevention of pollution in the food & agriculture and fish processing industries. Noteworthy aspects included environmental

improvements by reducing waste water and cutting production costs by reducing water consumption. Meanwhile, Damir Brlek, manager of the Environmental Protection and Quality Systems Department of the company DUKAT in Croatia spoke about the case study Med Clean No. 29 on reducing water and energy consumption in the milk-product industry. The company achieved water and energy savings and cut the pollutant load in waste water with a return on investment within just one month.

Finally, Ashraf Abou Hadeed, the former general manager of the Egyptian company Sila Edible Oils Company presented Med Clean No. 32 on the prevention of industrial pollution in the oil and soap industry. In this

case, the company managed to comply with the dumping limits set, cut maintenance costs by 10% and reduced water consumption and the requirements for waste water treatment by 46% and 66% respectively. In all of these practical cases favourable economic results for the companies were achieved when they introduced environmental practices into their production processes.

Those attending the event received a special edition of the Med Clean report, presenting 100 cases of companies that have satisfactorily implemented clean production techniques in the Mediterranean Sea region.

*For more information about the GRECO initiative and Med Clean case studies, please contact RAC/CP or visit the following webpage: [www.cprac.org](http://www.cprac.org) ■*

## 1.4. The CP/RAC organises a side event on industrial hazardous waste

Within the framework of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the CP/RAC organised a side event regarding industrial hazardous waste in the Mediterranean Region.

The event was held in the plenary room of the Palace of Expositions and Congress of Roquetas de Mar on 15th January and was introduced by Genoveva Català, manager of the Waste Agency of Catalonia (ARC) who emphasized the role of Catalonia in the Mediterranean cooperation through the activities developed by the CP/RAC.

Afterwards, Virginia Alzina, Director of CP/RAC, introduced the activities developed by the Centre within the scope of hazardous waste and presented main features of the Plan for the reduction by 20% of the generation of hazardous wastes from industrial installations in the Mediterranean Region, prepared by CP/RAC.

Some of the conclusions particularly pointed out were:

- In 2005, 20 million tons of HW were estimated to be generated in the Mediterranean Region.
- The contribution of France, Italy and Spain sums up to 85%.
- If Mediterranean countries reduced waste generation factor by 20%, 5 million tons of HW would be prevented.

In addition, some proposed actions were also highlighted:

- Development of sectoral waste minimization studies.
- Technical capacity building and dissemination.
- Development of National Plans.

—Adoption of cleaner production actions.

Following this, Jordi Bruno, professor of the Technical University of Catalonia contributed to the event by showing some particular cases where industrial installations have adopted satisfactorily cleaner production principles.

At the end of the event, summary leaflets with CD-ROM containing the Plan and especially edited for the occasion were handed out.

The Plan to reduce industrial hazardous waste was commissioned from the United Nations Environmental Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) within the Mediterranean GEF project in response to one of the objectives of the Strategic Action Programme for the Mediterranean Sea (SAP). The plan also facilitates the implementation of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources (LBS Protocol) and the Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Izmir Protocol).

The aim of the plan is to prevent/reduce by 20% HW generation through the improvement of industrial production and sectoral efficiency. To achieve it, the plan reviews the situation in the Region, identifies priorities to address according to industrial sectors and types of waste, and proposes an approach for reducing the “hazardous waste generation factor” (quantity of industrial hazardous waste generated / industrial GDP in euros). The plan also provides, among others, several technical options of reduction at source and on-site recycling aimed at reducing priority flows of identified hazardous waste.