

Annex II

Athens Charter on the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)

The members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and their partners, meeting in Athens, Greece, from 20 to 22 June 2005,

- Reaffirming the need to achieve sustainable development at the global, regional, national and local levels, as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to give due consideration to the Mediterranean Declaration for the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,
- Recalling the commitments made by Mediterranean countries, the European Community and their partners to promote sustainable development, in particular by adopting the various MCSD recommendations and proposals for action,
- Recalling again the Athens Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers for Environment in which it was recognized that the Barcelona Convention/Mediterranean Action Plan is the appropriate context for developing a Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development,
- Noting with satisfaction the recognition in the conclusions of the VIIIth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that the MSSD will become an important vehicle for mainstreaming sustainable development throughout the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
- Convinced that the elaboration and implementation of strategies for sustainable development at the regional and national levels are necessary to promote equity and shared prosperity,
- Recognizing the importance of the integrated approach and the participatory approach throughout the preparatory and implementation process of sustainable development strategies, together with access to information and proactive communication,
- Emphasizing that Mediterranean specificities require further attention to be given to the economic, social and environment pillars, as well as to the cultural and governance dimensions of sustainable development in a context of regional solidarity,
- Aware that the promotion of sustainable development and the protection of the environment require more effective cooperation between the public and private sector and with and between multilateral institutions and major groups, together with the participation of NGOs and local authorities,

- Underlining the strategic importance of the four main objectives that structure the MSSD,
- Concerned by the unequal development and technological gap between Mediterranean countries, as well as the financial constraints and the need to stimulate entrepreneurial dynamism,
- Underlining the need for sustainable development strategies to contribute to economic development by enhancing Mediterranean assets, reduce social disparities by achieving the MDGs, change unsustainable production and consumption patterns, ensure the sustainable management of natural resources, and improve governance at the local, national and regional levels,

Agree that,

- Serious policy and institutional reforms, together with the effective promotion of a culture of change, will be required if sustainable development strategies are to be implemented,
- Implementation of policy options and practical actions related to the priority fields of action should be internally owned and integrated into National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs) or national development plans,
- Contracting Parties have the primary role and responsibility to make available and accessible relevant information and to promote enabling environments with improved governance, active involvement of all the stakeholders and to develop adequate regulatory frameworks and measures,
- Appropriate initiatives by Contracting Parties to contribute to the objectives and orientations of the MSSD and to implement related actions should be supported by the international community, in particular regional institutions, through rationalized regional cooperation, equitable multilateral trading system and meaningful trade liberalization,
- Efforts by Governments and regional actors to implement the MSSD at the regional and national levels should be supported by an appropriate mobilization and provision of financial resources, using debt relief opportunities and innovative reconversion towards sustainable development actions, public-public and public-private partnerships, technological cooperation and capacity development, knowledge development with adequate research and development programmes,

Invite the Contracting Parties, their partners, the concerned actors and funding agencies, as appropriate,

- To adopt the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD),
- To prepare or update respective NSSDs, giving due consideration to the MSSD objectives, orientations and proposed actions in those strategies and in development plans and related actions,
- To integrate sustainable development principles, in particular through adequate revision of legal frameworks, and to provide relevant human, technical and financial means for the implementation of the MSSD and NSSDs,
- To support the implementation of Regional and National Strategies,
- To demonstrate clearly their commitments to implement the MSSD through specific projects at the regional, subregional, national and local levels, as well as through relevant partnership initiatives,
- To promote an interactive consultation mechanism and awareness-raising campaigns to ensure larger ownership and stronger political support,
- To ensure the role of civil society in the implementation of the MSSD and NSSDs,
- To evaluate progress in the implementation of the MSSD at the regional and national levels, using the set of indicators, in not more than 6 years and to take all necessary measures and actions to update their Strategies and improve their implementation.