

Sustainable Cooperation and Knowledge Transfer

March 11th – Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

Report:

March 11th - Hamburg Chamber of Commerce – this is where the first Hamburg water forum took place. The **Euro-Mediterranean Association for Cooperation and Development e.V.**, in short EMA, provided the settings to seek methods of resolution for an efficient and sustainable water management in the EMA region.

Patron of the event, which was held in cooperation with the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, was the **Federal Minister of Economy and Technology**, Rainer Brüderle.

“Clean water is a fundamental right for all men” opened Dr. Karl-Joachim Dreyer in his inaugural address for the water forum emphasizing the special interests of Hamburg as venue. Any other city in Germany is historically and economically as closely connected to the issues of water problems as the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg.



Prof. Dr. H. H. Siedentopf, president of the EMA, confirmed this in adhering that “the water forum is the beginning of a **long-term partnership** with regard to the problems of water management and for the benefit of everyone concerned”.

Guest of honor and president of the Arab Water Council, H. E. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, reminded in his speech “No Money - No Water - No Life” that the topic water has more to offer than only economic aspects. Water is the basis of existence and only close collaboration can develop sustainable solutions for the shortage of water in the EMA region.

Water is the origin of life. **Sufficient availability** and the **pureness of water** are therefore essential preconditions for a sustainable human management and peaceful cohabitation.

The EMA-region, as the most arid region all over the world, suffers above-average from the change of climate. **Improvement of management** and **efficient use of water resources** are major challenges for the countries in the EMA region. The water forum focused on sustainable water resources management, on sustainable use of water, drinking water purification and the use of grey water as well as waste water treatment.

Representatives of economy, research and politics reported in six panels about the different possibilities and problems of sustainable water management faced within the EMA region. **Technical innovations**, **political parameters** and **financial investment oppor-**

tunities and promotions in the water sector were discussed. In this context experts also explained the latest technical innovations concerning this sector.

Throughout the event enterprises, particularly medium-sized, were given the possibility to present their products and services to the audience: A venture covering the entire EMA-region and addressing in the first place German companies which so far represents a novelty.



In a relaxed atmosphere the event possibly laid the **foundation stone for future cooperation**. Facing the exacerbating problem of pollution and water shortage all participants – nearly 250 as well as 10 exhibitors – concurred, that the unequal distribution of water in the region only can be solved by close cooperation of all people and institutions concerned. All attendees punctuated that **knowledge** as well as **technology transfer** play an important role.

The question of common or legally binding strict conditions for water requires an urgent need of discussion. It was affirmed that an **euro-mediterranean knowledge transfer** - especially in regard of water conditioning – is emphatically desired.

In the town hall of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg the conference ended in a convivial atmosphere. In his opening remarks Mr. Stefan Herms, manager of the state chancellery, referred to the significance of the water forum for the Hanseatic City of Hamburg requesting a more intensive cooperation between the city of Hamburg and the countries of the EMA-region. Subsequently, the **signing of a cooperation agreement between EMA e.V. and the Arab Water Councils**, represented by H. E. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Zeid and Prof. Dr. Horst H. Siedentopf followed. This cooperation agreement is the basis of future cooperation in water management for the EMA-region. The evening ended in a relaxed atmosphere with interesting conversations.

The following day interested participants were given the opportunity to visit “Köhlbrandhöft”, the largest water purification plant in Germany, run by “Hamburg Wasser”.

