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Towards resilient and innovative groundwater governance in the Mediterranean to strengthen water security by 2050

Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Maritime Fisheries / Tunisia

Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum 2026 · 29 September – 2 October · La Nuvola, Rome

KEY INFORMATION

Date	30/09/2026
Time	11 :30 – 13 :00
Room	Circe
Format	Panel discussion
Language(s)	French, with simultaneous translation into English

SUMMARY

This session explores the conditions required to build modern, proactive and resilient aquifer governance in the face of climate pressures in the Mediterranean. Building on Tunisia's modernization strategy and a broader regional dialogue, the workshop aims to define concrete trajectories to move away from reactive crisis management to sustainable and concerted groundwater preservation.

AGENDA & SPEAKERS

Time	Speaker Name & Title	Organization	Role / Topic
11:30 (5')	Aida Jridi, in charge of the Directorate-General for Rural Engineering and Rural Operations.	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Maritime Fisheries (MARHP)	Moderator: Welcome and Introduction
11:35 (5')	Sinan Bacha, Head of the Office of Planning and Hydraulic Balance	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Maritime Fisheries (MARHP)	Speaker: Keynote, observation and diagnosis
11:45 (10')	Aissa Hlaimi, Director General of Water Resources	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Maritime Fisheries (MARHP)	Panelist / Groundwater Governance
11:55 (10')	Mouhli Soumaya, Division Manager Shared Water Governance	Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)	Panelist / Shared Water Governance
12:05 (10')	Jippe Hoogeveen, Senior Land and Water Officer, Water Data Team leader	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Panelist / Data for Groundwater Governance
12:15 (15')	Moderator & Panelists / Q&A Session		
12:30 (25')	Moderator & Panelists / Discussion with the audience		
12:55 (5')	Moderator: Summary and Closing		

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Groundwater is the main strategic capital for water security in many Mediterranean countries. It provides drinking water for millions of citizens, supports irrigated agriculture and preserves ecosystems. However, this invisible resource is now under unprecedented pressure: chronic overexploitation, salinization, diffuse pollution and degradation of recharge areas, all amplified by climate change.
The preservation of aquifers can no longer rely solely on sectoral technical responses. It requires a profound evolution towards proactive governance focused on:

1. Scientific knowledge and data transparency (digital tools, real-time monitoring).
2. Strong regulations adapted to new climate realities, including active user participation.

This session will highlight the reforms undertaken by Tunisia while opening a transnational dialogue on reproducible solutions (controlled recharge, integration of non-conventional waters, management of transboundary aquifers) in order to definitively break with reactive crisis management.

OBJECTIVES

- To position groundwater governance as a fundamental and inseparable pillar of long-term water security strategies in the Mediterranean.
- To promote Tunisia's achievements and innovations in hydrogeological monitoring, digital planning and sampling control to inspire regional replication dynamics.
- Promote integrated decision-making processes, based on science, reliable data and the optimal use of digital technologies.
- Identify the institutional, legal and economic reforms needed to ensure the balance and sustainability of aquifers.
- Strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation around the challenges of climate resilience and concerted management of shared water resources.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Public decision-makers, senior civil servants and managers of water services.

- Scientific community, hydrogeologists and researchers.
- International financial institutions and development partners.
- International organizations and regional secretariats (e.g. Union for the Mediterranean).
- Water users' associations, agricultural representatives and civil society.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Production of operational and concrete recommendations aimed at feeding into the official commitments of the 6th Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum, the SDGs and the Union for the Mediterranean Water Strategy.
- Definition of clear trajectories to modernise legislative frameworks and adapt demand management tools in the face of climate stress by 2050.
- Creation of technical and financial partnership opportunities to support artificial groundwater recharge projects and the deployment of interconnected monitoring networks.