Sustainable Consumption
and Civil Society

State of play

in the

Mediterranean Partner Countries

Regional activity center for Cleaner Production (CP/RAC)
Medietrranean Action Plan

Regional Activity Centre
for Cleaner Production

UNEP

MAP

STOCKHOLM
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, sustainable consumption has proved to be one of the key concepts in the framework of sustainability, and upon said application depends, to a great extent, the urgent and necessary improvements with regard to climate change, human rights or human and environmental health and wellbeing. A detailed study of this consumer model and of the primary participants related to it has therefore become a necessary prerequisite for putting into effect any initiatives.

In accordance with the framework for action of CP/RAC, within the Mediterranean Action Plan, there is a diagnostic analysis of those countries that comprise the Mediterranean area, with a focus on the existing level of application with regard to sustainable consumption, and its promotion, which is carried out by civil society or the third sector through various organisations.

Our objective, therefore, is centred on identifying who promotes sustainable consumption in Mediterranean countries, using what initiatives and what means, alliances, resources, etc. To do this, we contacted representatives of the principal local organisations in each country dedicated to the promotion of sustainable consumption, as well as a series of experts on the various regions of study, in order to compare the information received.

As a starting point, different conceptions about sustainable consumption that are present on a general level are analysed, distinguishing between strong and weak sustainable consumption, both at local and international levels.

Civil society, especially in western countries, has shown itself to be a significant driving force in the policies and initiatives related to sustainable consumption, publicising it amongst the public, governments and companies, and at the same time pressuring for the inclusion of related measures in political agendas. The study of these initiatives and the understanding of what sustainable consumption the various organisations offer, will be defined, among other factors, by the typology or classification of the organisations, both at the 'final objective' and action model level, or by the relationship that it maintains with other public and private organisations. On the other hand, based on the necessity of the organisations to work together in order to increase impact, implications and public presence, the primary obstacles that make this process difficult are measured, as well as the different types of present and possible collaborations, making special mention of second-level networks and structures.

Taking the investigation to the Mediterranean, we can evaluate the different existing situations, distinguishing among them various regions with different degrees of economic and social development that inevitably mark both the development of civil society and the level of dissemination and practical application of the concept of sustainable consumption. Despite certain differences, the regional classification based on geographical area seems to be the most representative and useful for dealing with the analysis, resulting in four large regions: the Balkans (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania), the Middle East (Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey), the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) and Southern Europe (Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Monaco, Cyprus and Malta).

The Baltic region has been strongly marked by the recent conflicts brought about by the dismantling of former Yugoslavia, and by its previous membership in the Soviet bloc and the centralized economic system. Both factors have delayed and interfered with the advent of civil society, and its representation through NGOs and other social groups. However, the last decade of partial stability, proximity to the EU and other, more developed European countries, has encouraged the appearance of new social

movements, which are more modern, developed and, on occasion, rebellious, and which have echoed the economic, social and environmental problems.

Faced with complex and urgent challenges such as waste management, insufficient energy efficiency or the lack of basic resources like water, the civil society organisations (CSOs) of the Balkan states have undertaken the task of promoting sustainable consumption from two basic approaches. A more widespread environmental vision, that attempts the addition of more environmentally friendly and sustainable consumption models, and community development, from which the prosperity and wellbeing of the most disadvantaged communities is sought, through sustainable development, from savings in consumption and the generation of new, alternative incomes (eco-tourism).

In spite of the efforts made by the CSOs, promotion is still in an intermediary phase, focused on education and awareness raising. The support of other European countries, as well as regional coordination (a good example is the REC network), have been shown to be essential elements in the interests of both sustainable consumption and the development of civil society.

The context of the regions of the Middle East and Maghreb are distinguished from the Balkans, primarily by the lower level of development of civil society. With the complicated historical situation, especially in the Middle East, the political and economic instability in the second half of the Twentieth century has led to a present marked, in some cases, by poverty (aggravated by demographic explosion and unemployment), high pollution, unequal access to basic resources, and the destruction and exhaustion of natural resources. On the other hand, and to varying degrees, depending on the country in question, the emergence of civil society representatives was blocked or hampered, which is why there is no social group membership tradition here, as there is in Europe.

If in the Middle East the scant promotion of sustainable consumption that exists is directed jointly by the governments and the CSOs, in Maghreb it is the public administrations that are providing a noticeable boost towards the policies of sustainability, accompanied by a poorly represented civil society. While the governments focus their policies on the environment, with priorities such as pollution, effective energy use or adaptation to western market requirements, civil society organisations have been centred primarily on local contexts, searching for community development, relief from poverty and marginalisation, or avoiding an exodus from rural areas.

While many of the governments in these regions have joined in agreements and international commitments demonstrating their will to change, it is still necessary to resolve serious existing social and environmental problems. To do this, the primary objective is the promotion and development of civil society, helping in the incorporation or reconciliation of the decision-making process, as well as its presence and representation among the population.

Lastly, the region of Southern Europe, which includes the Mediterranean EU member states with the exception of Slovenia, is characterized by being the most developed by far in the Mediterranean, both in the level of sustainable consumption and in the development and influence of civil society. With a long tradition of associative work, helped by decades of political stability, citizens have been creating all sorts of representative organisations that circulate and safeguard their interests against governments and businesses. From multiple approaches (polarizing or integrating, discriminating or not, etc.) many of these organisations have been part of the process of generation and development of the concept of sustainable consumption from the

beginning. Also, it is in this region that we find the largest number of initiatives and agreements reached by both governments and companies.

The high level of development of both factors, combined with a clearly superior availability of economic and human resources, has prompted a tendency toward specialisation, leading to 'sub-areas' within sustainable consumption such as Fair Trade, Emissions Offsets, responsible institutional procurement or Green Procurement, Sustainable Fashion, etc. Some more combative organisations have even proposed a change in the current economic model, rejecting consumerism and promulgating more egalitarian wealth distribution models.

The possibilities of cooperation in this region are numerous, not only for the large number of organisations and initiatives present but also for the growing public awareness of the problems arising from inefficient and exacerbated consumption, such as climate change, water shortages or environmental pollution.

In short, analysing sustainable consumption and the civil society organisations that promote it in the Mediterranean, we find three completely different stages of development. On the one hand, Southern Europe, where CSOs, administrations and, to a lesser extent, businesses are accepting and incorporating criteria for responsible consumption; the Balkan region, still underway, with active organisations that are attempting to raise public awareness and pressure current governments; and on the other the Middle East and Maghreb, in the early stages, where sustainable consumption is beginning to be promoted as a tool for solving major problems such as poverty, disease, erosion or a shortage of basic resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The promotion of sustainable consumption is beginning to gain recognition as one of the principal action themes in favour of sustainable development by scientists and international organisations. The consumption level in many developed and developing countries is extremely high and unsustainable. Numerous reports show that we would need six planets if we all consumed at the same level as the Americans[1]. It is evident that it is not possible to achieve a more sustainable development model if, aside from changing the production patterns, a change is not produced in consumption habits.

Sustainable consumption is also one of the pillars of the United Nations agenda for sustainable development. The Johannesburg Summit in 2002 pointed out the links between consumption and production and its action plan underlined the need to establish a strategy that deals completely with consumption and production. The Marrakech Process initiated by UNEP DTIE establishes a programme framework to support regional and national initiatives that allow for a more rapid acceleration towards more sustainable production and consumption models. However, many of the initiatives put into action through this programme framework have been centred in Europe, America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

At a regional level, in the Mediterranean, the need to dissociate environmental development and degradation is urgent given the pressure that the 22 countries that comprise the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) exert over the region, affected among other things by water shortages, climate change, mass tourism and uncontrolled town planning in coastal zones. The Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development, adopted in 2005 in order to facilitate compliance with the Johannesburg agreements, also recognizes the need to change the patterns of production and consumption, establishing this as one of its four objectives.

In practice, until now the Mediterranean Action Plan, through CP/RAC, has focused its work on promoting the change of production patterns in the companies of the region, using an approach based on promoting cleaner production through the application of best available techniques in industrial processes, and recently increasing its action to other sectors such as services and agriculture. CP/RAC has taken on the challenge of developing sustainable consumption by modifying its mission to include both objectives. Consequently its new mission is to promote mechanisms that allow production and consumption patterns in the Mediterranean to change towards more sustainable models.

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The study is divided into the following parts: Firstly, it presents the objectives and methodology of the report. Secondly, it reflects on the current state of the literature. This section also analyses how civil society works and what challenges are facing collective work. Thirdly, it presents the field work, where the principal organisations that work in the realm of sustainable consumption and the most notable initiatives of the 21 countries of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the EU. Finally, it concludes with an outline of the recommendations for the development of sustainable consumption with civil society to CP/RAC for use in its work.

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[1] http://www.earthday.net/Footprint

1.2. Objectives

This report attempts to offer a triple outlook regarding the situation of the promotion of sustainable consumption by civil society organisations in the member states of the Mediterranean Action Plan. This three-pronged outlook includes the following objectives:

a) Understanding who promotes sustainable consumption, particularly which are the most active civil society organisations in this field. This includes social, environmental and consumer organisations. While the focus is toward civil society, certain public institutions that are notable for their innovative capacity are also included in this field.

b) Study which initiatives are being promoted.

c) Analyse how civil society organisations work, how they relate to each other to promote sustainable consumption, what networks exist and what their origins are.

1.3. Methodology

With regard to the method employed to answer these questions, firstly an informative compilation was made on the situation in each of the 22 member states of the Mediterranean Action Plan using secondary (Internet) and primary (telephone and e-mail interviews) sources.

Once the principal civil society organisations that promote sustainable consumption in the countries of study were selected, their participation was solicited through answering questionnaires that had been previously prepared, and from them the relevant information about both the organisations and active initiatives were grouped and systemized for later study.

A preliminary first analysis of the information serves as a basis for contrasting conflicting points, as well as to verify the accuracy of the information given.

The second main source of information is based on personal interviews with five experts on sustainable consumption and civil society, chosen because of their extensive knowledge of the four main areas of the Mediterranean (Maghreb, the Middle East, the Balkans and Southern Europe). Valuable information about the unique situation of each country was gathered from these interviews, from when the knowledge of these academics group together the general and the particular, giving a provisional vision of the evolution and local idiosyncrasies that we cannot easily deduce from the previous questionnaires to the organisations. On the other hand, the regional context on which we based the interview enables us to more accurately identify the opportunities for cooperation between various organisations through networks or international organisations.

The combination of the two primary sources of information mentioned results in a detailed map of the Mediterranean as far as organisations, networks and promotional initiatives for sustainable consumption are concerned, lending credibility and accuracy to the data obtained.

From an exhaustive analysis of said information, answers to the three questions we asked regarding the project goals emerge, leading to the drafting of the final report in which recommendations are made to CP/RAC on how to effectively get involved in the promotion of sustainable consumption in cooperation with civil society in Mediterranean countries.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Sustainable Consumption and Civil Society from the Mediterranean point of view.

2.1. Major challenges to sustainable consumption: global governance

'The current levels and patterns of consumption, in particular in industrialised nations, are one of the primary causes, if not the most important, of the world's environmental degradation today' (UNDP 1998). Without sustainable consumption sustainable development will be impossible.

Sustainable consumption is becoming one of the highlighted topics on the global governance agenda (Reisch 1999) in various United Nations programmes. Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 made a call for the adoption of sustainable consumption patterns (UN 1993). Other international organisations such as the OECD, WTO and numerous international and national institutes have developed reports, dialogues and initiatives to boost sustainable consumption, but in spite of these initiatives, their effect appears to be minimal. (Fusch 2005).

International organisations have centred their efforts on developing activities designed for better understanding and the spreading of policies for the increase of eco-efficiency. However, few actions have been developed in what is often considered the key to sustainable consumption: changing the patterns of consumption. (Princen 1999).

2.1.1. Weak and Strong Sustainable Consumption

One of the basic reference sources for the definition of sustainable consumption is the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987)[2]. This report defines *sustainable development* as 'the utilisation of goods and services that meet basic needs and contribute to an improvement in the quality of life without endangering the needs of future generations.' Sustainable development lays the basis for the conceptualisation of sustainable consumption.

At the Oslo Summit in 1994 *sustainable consumption* was defined as 'the use of goods and services that meet basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations' (Norway 1994). Some authors such as (Daly 1998; Princen 1999; Spangeberg 2002) argue that for the advance of sustainable consumption, two types of sustainable consumption must be developed: weak and strong.

1) *Weak sustainable consumption:* sustainable consumption requires an increase in the production efficiency of goods and services that can be achieved using better technologies. Improvements in eco-efficiency have been associated with a reduction in resources consumed per consumption unit. Often, these improvements are seen as profitable for both businesses and the environment. However, due to the fact that the limited resources of the Earth (Pearce 1998), population growth levels and their associated consumption are greater than the levels of their regeneration, and due to high levels of pollution linked to extraction and consumption, sustainable consumption

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[2] Socio-economic report in 1987 for NATO by a commission headed by Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. Originally entitled *Our Common Future*, it was in this report that the term sustainable development was used for the first time. The Brundtland Report inspired meetings at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit, which took place in Rio in 1992. At this conference Agenda 21 was drafted.

based on improvements in efficiency has been named 'weak sustainable consumption' since it is considered insufficient to compensate for the increases in consumption volume (Greening 2000).

2) *Strong sustainable consumption:* A second requirement to assure sustainable consumption is a change in consumption habits and the reduction of consumption levels in industrialised nations. This condition, however, requires changes in infrastructure as well as in consumer choice habits and calls into question the classic theories based on the need for continual growth.

Princen, (Princen 1999) defends the idea that sustainable consumption development should be centred on strong sustainable consumption, as it is this which distinguishes and characterizes the rest of the sustainable development initiatives and will have the greatest impact both environmentally and redistributively. However, the majority of the initiatives developed by businesses and international organisations, as well as those developed by civil society, have been centred on measures to promote weak sustainable consumption.

2.1.2.   The complexity of analysis in the Mediterranean

The development of strong sustainable consumption includes the **reflection of the complexity** of the current economic model (Sanches 2005) and the determinants of the consumers' consumption behaviour. In the current global economy, consumption patterns are determined not only by the developed state policies but also by other socio-cultural factors that affect consumers, such as fashion, values created from consumption and new needs.

The different **dimensions of globalisation** affect the development of sustainable consumption. International trade flows, direct long-term foreign investment by multinational corporations, planned short-term capital flow, migratory flows and the dissemination and transfer of technology between countries make the interests tied to consumption more complex and international. The capacity to transmit messages linked to consumption is becoming international but at the same time it is becoming democratic. Globalisation brings increased international access to the media to corporate assets such as civil society organisations and international organisations that were previously unimaginable (Bhagwati 2005). The economic influence of these international companies is confronted, although at times supported, by organisations whose interests diverge from economic efficiency. These movements are often a source of ideological and cultural dynamism and confrontation against traditional business values.

On the other hand, globalisation, in principal, should reduce distances between northern **and southern countries**[3]. However, despite appearing to demonstrate that consumption behaviour and consumption values do appear to be universalising towards a global 'consumerism', the consumption capacity of the inhabitants of the north and south based on per capita income do not converge in the same way. Also, southern countries appear to consider globalisation as a positive force. In 2002 the company Environics International presented an analysis that demonstrated this. Environics carried out a global survey on twenty five thousand city residents in *twenty-five countries and presented the results at the annual summit of the World Economic Forum in which it presented this paradoxical vision of globalisation from both northern and southern economies. (Bhagwati 2005).*

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[3] By northern countries, we are referring to those Mediterranean countries that belong to the OECD and the EU and which present higher levels of industrialisation. The southern countries of the Mediterranean are those that do not belong to the OECD or the EU. We use the terms 'north' and 'south' to avoid connotations that promote non-sustainable growth policies like the terminologies usually used in economic reports that speak about developed countries and developing countries.

With respect to sustainable consumption the research that was carried out in the northern and southern countries also yields paradoxical results.

With respect to *weak sustainable consumption* the debate appears to be centred on the speed at which the southern countries should integrate the improvements in eco-efficiency. The outsourcing of companies in favour of cost reduction (most importantly labour, but also closely tied to the more lenient social and environmental legislation of the majority of the southern countries), has led to rapid industrialisation in southern countries. However, this industrialisation has been 'dirty', which is to say without keeping in mind its social and environmental impact. For this reason, the introduction of improvements in eco-efficiency in the southern countries is often seen as a demand from the northern countries that is detrimental to the global competitiveness of the southern countries that must apply them. However, the southern countries are beginning to suffer the costs of this 'rapid and dirty' industrialisation and are developing measures in order to introduce cleaner production methods in their industries.

In relation to *strong sustainable consumption,* the paradox appears to be even more complicated. On the one hand, it is strange to talk about consumerism in southern countries in which the majority of inhabitants are unable to cover their basic needs or where their income levels are close to the poverty line. Consumerism in these countries is mainly an aspect of the upper classes of the population and although they create examples and social models to imitate, they are not globally as influential for the environment due to the proportionally low volume. On the other hand, rapid industrialisation and the price reduction of certain consumer goods (from automobiles to mobile telephones and other small household appliances) make access to large quantities easy for consumers, creating high levels of environmental pollution. The consumption rate is increasing more rapidly than the eco-efficiency of the goods consumed and the environmental consequences are soon apparent. To all of this it should be added that southern countries have not yet developed recycling and waste-collection systems capable of dealing with the increased consumption levels of the new objects that have different recycling needs. This makes the related waste pollution of the new consumed products even more evident.

The discourse on strong sustainable consumption in northern and southern countries cannot be the same, as northern countries start from a basis of abundance and those in the south from a basis of shortage. However, raising awareness regarding the impact that our current consumption levels are having is a necessary task for the governments of northern and southern countries.

Globalisation is also reopening the debate about the need to **rethink the systems of global governance.** The trans-nationalisation of negative externalities, for example pollution and massive migration; the increase in power of certain international agents such as multinational companies and international organisations such as the WTO and the IMF; the crisis of confidence in the governments in certain states; the reform of the welfare state and the apparent increase in the mobilisation capacity of certain civil society groups, thanks to new technologies, are questioning current forms of decision-making and resolution to global problems. The development of strong and weak sustainable consumption is without doubt one of these problems.

The analytical process of consumption behaviour must include all of the potential agents interested in determining the values with which they evaluate consumption. The development of strong sustainable consumption includes not only traditional elements of sustainable consumption policy-making (responsible shopping or 'green procurement'; eco-taxes; ecolabels; and awareness campaigns about the ecological impact of our consumption) without having to rely on a wider framework that permits the analysis and redefinition of the patterns of consumption through socio-economic

development both locally and globally. For this it is necessary to have a model that redefines the concept of sustainable consumption that includes all the agents of global governance: international organisations, businesses and civil society.

2.1.3. International organisations and businesses in the development of sustainable consumption

The role of international organisations in the development of sustainable consumption is fundamental but it is centred, primarily, on the promotion of weak sustainable consumption. The article by Fuchs and Loreck (2005) concludes that despite the fact that international organisations are developing major work in raising awareness of sustainable consumption, the majority of their activities are centred on weak sustainable consumption. Strong sustainable consumption has been marginalised in the majority of the political debates not only by organisations such as the OECD and the WTO but also in global institutions such as the United Nations and national organisations such as various governments throughout the Mediterranean. The article adds that a global governance of strong sustainable consumption must be developed using new political strategies that link non-governmental organisations related to sustainable consumption.

The lack of interest in strong sustainable consumption by institutions and international organisations is usually attributed to diverse factors, among which are: 1) the fact that there are various definitions of sustainable consumption that often compete against each other (UNEP 2002). 2) the weakness of international organisations dedicated to the promotion of strong sustainable consumption. As a consequence of this weakness international organisations have decided to take a more conservative position on this highly relevant topic in a capitalistic society.

Another conclusion provided by the Fusch and Loreck study (2005) is that the majority of the studies and activities undertaken by both UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) and UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) as well as those by the OECD are centred on isolated events and do not constitute continuous processes of sustainable consumption development.

On the other hand, most importantly the actions developed from the UNEP strategic report 'Opportunities for Consumption' (UNEP 2001) have been centred on the development of the SCOPE programme (Sustainable Consumption Opportunities for Europe). This project has been developed as an initiative to increase the awareness of policy-making agents regarding the topic of sustainable consumption. This programme includes a discussion and some recommendations for actions centred especially on the development of relationships between civil society organisations. However, according to Fuchs and Loreck (2995), this programme has two principal weaknesses: 1) it is primarily focused on Eastern European countries and recently independent countries due to the availability of funds for focusing on these countries; 2) the resulting coalition activities were on isolated actions lacking a continuous change management process. In 2002 UNEP developed a new report entitled 'Global Status Report' in which it identified 6 areas where they see the need for greater efforts towards sustainable consumption. UNEP itself has developed a series of 10-year framework programmes in which it attempts to accelerate the change towards sustainable consumption and production. These plans are putting into action numerous activities; however, various authors suggest that UNEP should overcome the current explicit exclusion of strong sustainable consumption activities and policies (Fuchs & Loreck 2005).

Lastly, **businesses** have an increasingly greater capacity to influence governments and questions of global governance. With regard to their corporate social responsibility policies, leading businesses are developing information campaigns on the

environmental impact of their products. Some highly regulated sectors, such as alcoholic drinks, are changing their strategies to adapt to the law, but also to positively influence consumption behaviours that are considered harmful.

An interesting first case is that of Diagio and its campaigns to reduce alcohol consumption among young people and risk groups. A second case is food chains like Tesco or Carrefour that inform their clients of the ecological impact of their products through labels and free magazines. Traditionally highly polluting industries such as the automotive industry are also beginning to redefine their brand values and to produce new products more in accord with sustainable consumption. Almost all of the large automobile manufacturers now have a 'green' line that incorporates environmentally friendly values. The big mining businesses are beginning to reposition themselves as energy-supplying businesses, changing their marketing mix towards more ecological products.

Despite the fact that the current market is not particularly familiar with the idea of strong sustainable consumption, there are various arguments by which businesses could accept a philosophy of consumption volume reduction.

In the first place, there is a strategy to increase quality and brand value as well as increase the price. This means consumption volume reduction but often increases product margins. This strategy, widely used among luxury products, has been difficult to implement in consumer goods primarily due to the increase in inflation that it causes. Also, in a global market it is very difficult to execute a strategy without brand differentiation and/or a coordinated commitment from all the producers.

A second argument is that in which businesses are situated as citizens of a society that must confront the challenges of sustainable development. This hypothesis is utilized by the authors who develop CSR. These authors argue that businesses can and are changing values to include social and environmental problems in their strategies. Additionally, they are conscious of their influence on global governance and this makes them responsible for the social and environmental problems of their communities. However, many criticisms have been raised against this argument of 'goodness and civil responsibility' of the businesses per se and take a stand against self-regulation.

The role of businesses in strong sustainable consumption is still incipient. A detailed case study of large and medium-sized businesses would help to better understand the business strategies for the development of strong sustainable consumption, the problems and competitive advantages that it offers.

2.2. Civil society's role in sustainable consumption

Civil society organisations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academic and research institutions, are beginning to take an active role in sustainable consumption development. Proof of this are the numerous organisations and the international conferences that have taken place in recent years and deal with this topic at both a local and global level.

The following chart contains some of the most important international conferences on the topic of sustainable consumption:

Chart 1: Selection of International Conferences on Sustainable Consumption
Organized by or in collaboration with the International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption (ICSPAC)

1994 – Symposium on Sustainable Consumption (Oslo, Ministry of the Environment, Norway 1994)
1995 – Ministerial round table in Oslo. (Ministry of the Environment, Norway, 1995)
1995 – Clarifying Concepts, Seminar (Rosendal)
1995 – Seminar on Policy Measures for Changing Consumption Patterns (Seoul)
1996 – Seminar on Tendencies and Policies (Brasilia)
1998 – UN Inter-Regional Expert Group Meeting on Extension of the Guidelines on Consumer Protection (Sao Paulo)
1998 – Seminar on Production Indicators and Sustainable Consumption (New York)
1998 – Encouraging Local Initiatives towards Sustainable Consumption Patterns (Vienna)
1998 – Consumption in a Sustainable World (Kabelvag) (IIED)
1999 – From Consumer Society to Sustainable Society (Soesterber)
1999 – Sustainable Consumption: Trends and Traditions in Eastern Asia (Chejudo)
1999 – Seventh Session on Sustainable Consumption and Development (New York)
2000 – Creating Opportunities in a Changing World (Berlin)
2002 – Implementing Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies (Paris)
2003 – International Experts Meeting on the Decennial Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Marrakech)
From 2003 – Regional Expert Meetings within the UN Decennial Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Source: Adapted from (ICSPAC 2002)

Although NGOs are not in the privileged situation of international organisations for the study of synergies and global accords, global NGOs, often in collaboration with local NGOs, have managed to contribute to the global governance of sustainable consumption (Fuchs 2005). The work and knowledge of NGOs often contributes to the knowledge of international organisations. Additionally, NGO activities are important because of their influence on social values and the creation and strengthening of social movements that have extended beyond the frontiers of NGOs.

The role of NGOs in sustainable consumption development is principally centred on activities to promote sustainable consumption aimed at direct citizen action. It is difficult to deal with the wide spectrum of civil society organisations that work with sustainable consumption and development. Many of these organisations do not use the terms sustainable consumption or responsible consumption, rather their activities are focused on raising public awareness of related topics. There again, it is also difficult to distinguish those organisations linked in some way to institutional entities from spontaneous social movements that are later formalized as non-governmental organisations.

In spite of the difficulty in including all the civil society organisations that work in sustainable consumption, in chart 2 we make a first connection of the principal activities regarding sustainable consumption promotion developed by the NGOs.

Chart 2: Principal generic activities developed by NGOs

- The promotion of good practices in consumption patterns such as which activities pollute more, which means of transport to use, how to save energy, water, etc., through direct information (Internet pages, direct marketing using pamphlets) and through meetings and forums.

- Information about specific products, their energy consumption throughout their life cycles, environmental impact (emissions, waste generation, etc.).

- The proposal of consumption reduction activities and the promotion of services that replace products.

- The development of tools for the measurement of the environmental impact related to consumption levels: e.g. ecological footprints, etc.

- The development of indicators to measure the environmental impact of the products we consume.

- The development of informative documents regarding the problems of sustainable consumption and development.

- The development of reports aimed at economic and fiscal policies that would help reduce the environmental impact of consumption: for example, the proposal of eco-taxes, and the development of policies to increase measures of producer responsibility (especially agricultural) for their ecological impact.

- -The development of advertising campaigns in favour of a certain alternative service.

- The development of boycott campaigns against certain businesses or institutions that harm sustainable consumption development.

- Business advice activities regarding a cleaner production development.

- General symposiums to discuss the concept of sustainable consumption.

Chart 3 shows the primary studies developed by NGOs on sustainable consumption. These reports come from various entities and defend interests which are sometimes at odds. However, the pluralistic debate that the different reports from civil society associations provide enriches agents' views. We have gathered an example of this plurality in chart 3. In contains some of the primary studies developed by NGOs in recent years. The data source is principally the Fuchs article (2005), updated with more recent studies from other organisations that we considered of importance. This chart, however, does not attempt to be exhaustive or complete, but simply serves as an indication of the types of studies carried out by civil society with regard to sustainable consumption.

Chart 3: Principal reports on Sustainable Consumption developed by NGOs and International Organisations

1995 - Friends of the Earth Europe: (Spangeberg, ed.). *Towards a Sustainable Europe*.
1996 – World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). *Sustainable Production and Consumption: a business perspective*.
1997 - Friends of the Earth International. *Sustainable Consumption: a global perspective.*
1999 - World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). *Sustainability through the Market*.
2001 – Tools for Transition. *Transition towards Sustainable Production and Consumption.*
2002 - World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). *The Business Case for Sustainable Development*.
2002 – European Association of Communication Agencies and the World Federation of Advertisers. *Industry as a Partner for Sustainable Development*.
2002 – International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption (ICSPAC). *Waiting for Delivery*.

2004 – Worldwatch Institute. *The State of the World 2004: Special Focus: The Consumer Society.*

The studies carried out by the International Chamber of Commerce and by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in 2002 should be emphasised. This report gave consumers an essential role in market transformation. The study placed environmental and social responsibility clearly on the side of demand, which is to say on consumers, instead of on supply, the businesses producing goods and services. The report identifies improvements in eco-efficiency as one of the important contributions to sustainable consumption, but clearly avoids any discussion about the role of businesses in the reduction of excess consumption. The only additional responsibility laid upon business is that of informing consumers about the social and environmental impact of their consumption choices and offering adequate services and products.

Other reports place emphasis on the need to develop collective strategies for the development of a subject as complicated as that of sustainable consumption. The SPAC Watch Report prepared by the Integrative Strategies Forum on behalf of the International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption contributes to understanding what the NGOs think of the actions developed by western governments with regard to sustainable consumption. This report attempted to increase mobilisation of governments, industry and the media regarding sustainable consumption.

Although it is not easy to study the sphere of strong sustainable consumption in economy and management, some academics have dealt with the topic from a more sociologic perspective as a technical perspective related to the environmental impact.

Major studies have been carried out on the will and capacity of consumers to reduce consumption and the need to change consumption patterns. At present only some of the ideas brought up in these investigations have made it to international discourses on sustainable consumption. Some national and international agencies like the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) or the Oxford Commission on Sustainable Consumption have assumed the part of 'translators' between politicians and scientist in this respect. However, the results have still not been made known to the general public (Fusch 2005).

2.3. Civil Society Organisations: Classifications

An investigation of civil society and responsible consumption needs one or several classifications of the many organisations that exist. In the development of classifications we must bear in mind the usefulness of the classification for later analysis and that the defined classification criteria are done inductively.

For this report we felt it useful to conduct two types of classifications:

1. The first classification is derived from the primary objective or mission of the organisations. In this we could talk about '**environmental organisations'**, mainly dedicated to the defence or protection of the environment, '**social organisations'**, mainly dedicated to the defence of human rights and the rights of underprivileged groups, and '**consumer organisations'**, oriented toward the protection of consumer rights.

This classification can be useful for its simplicity, but as it relates to civil society or third sector organisations, it becomes more complicated, and it is insufficient to gather the principal types of organisation that we find.

2. A second classification based on relational processes developed by NGOs with other social agents. This classification is more complicated and often the borders between the campaigns are vague, since the same organisation can arrange boycott campaigns and collaborate with businesses. However, we considered it useful to employ this typology given that it helps us understand the best type of relationship that CP/RAC can develop with each of the civil society organisations.

In *The 21st Century NGO* (SustainAbility, 2003), prepared by SustainAbility, UNEP and the UN Global Compact, civil society organisations are classified in an innovative system combining two factors that permit a more rigorous analysis, a profile including their integrating qualities, and maximum and minimum discrimination capacity. Using these factors, four types are reproduced, which SustainAbility names in marine code 'sharks', 'killer whales', 'sea lions' and 'dolphins' (see chart 4).

Chart 4: NGO classifications

Sharks, Killer Whales, Sea Lions and Dolphins		
	Polarizing aspects Aimed at achieving change causing problems to the status quo through confrontation.	**Integrating aspects** Aimed at achieving change through constructive cooperation with businesses, governments and other agents.
Discriminatory Study the objectives in order to understand how to better commit themselves to them	**Killer Whales** - Very intelligent - Strategic - Independent - Unpredictable - They eat sea lions and some dolphins	**Dolphins** - Great capacity for learning - Adapt strategies and their behaviour to the context - Creative - Avoid sharks
Non-discriminatory Do not discriminate between objectives	**Sharks** - Act instinctively - Tacit in the best of cases - Attack any object in danger - Often attack in packs - Feeding frenzy	**Sea Lions** - Like to please - Professional with good training - Prefer not to swim against the current - Worry if they are separated from the group

Source: (SustainAbility 2003)

In our investigation, we apply this last classification, focused on its greater or lesser capacity for integration and discrimination, in the analysis of organisations in southern Europe, where we found a greater complexity and variety of institutions. We will use the first classification, focused on the primary goal of the organisation, in the rest of the countries.

2.4. Civil society and the challenges of global coordination

The analysis of the third sector presents a challenge in itself given its intrinsic characteristics. The third sector is characterized by its enormous plurality, it is made up

of a large number of organisations of various sizes, cultures, origins and resources, in which the services provided to each of the areas of activity (despite the fact that we are focusing on the development of sustainable consumption) are frequently similar, and in which raising public awareness and the relationship with the 'donors' is the key factor for survival and at the same time the greatest risk for losing the intrinsic mission.

This pluralistic logic, which the majority of the organisations share, at least theoretically, cannot be translated, in the majority of Mediterranean countries, to a high level of cooperation. We observe a highly diverse, multiform and pluralistic sector, which also signifies a fragmented and split sector (Vernis 2004).

It is precisely these characteristics of flexibility, agility and social commitment that make the non-profit sector today appear as an option in the context of global governance marked by the crisis of the institutional sectors. However, it is the characteristics of fragmentation, atomization and lack of transparency which makes it necessary to carefully analysis the sector understanding all of the implications of the granting of greater political powers and areas of action.

2.4.1. Problems developing collective strategies

The cooperation between NGOs is one of the unresolved issues. According to Vernis (2004) some of the factors that explain this low level of systematic cooperation and coordination are as follows:

- *Competition for resources and users.* The new institutional, operative and financial environment resulting from a growing policy of State delegation to private organisations is giving rise not only to a high level of opportunity, but also competition between NGOs and/or businesses to obtain resources, mainly service contracts and attract users and/or members. This competitive climate is shown in practice by a certain isolation of the organisations that keep information to themselves and mistrust working together. This perception has been proved erroneous by sectors that are more advanced in the administration of and competition for resources such as businesses, since cooperation often helps channel resources and knowledge sharing increases the quality of the services provided.

- *The dispersion of efforts.* This phenomenon is frequent in second-level structures (whose dynamic is explained in section 2.4.2.2.), which have multiplied enormously recently following a territorial, sector and institutional basis. It is not uncommon to find local, provincial, autonomous and state federations and coordinators. However, a coordination system is more difficult to find among the Mediterranean countries. Frequently the problem with these federations at various levels is the overlapping of their duties and the lack of coordination among them.

- *Lack of time.* Pressure and the rushed nature of daily management prove to be an impediment to good management in any kind of organisation. Lack of professionalism and training in management, the small amount of time dedicated to the development of the mission and strategic objection of the organisation has led many of them to be run based on a 'putting out the fires' system rather than a long-term efficiency management system.

- *Lack of resources.* Every cooperation process needs to be managed, which implies a certain dedication of financial, material and human resources. Small organisations which have very tight resources always have more difficulties in cooperating, although there are also greater incentives. In the private sector, it

is precisely small businesses that tend to develop a greater number of cooperation projects with their peers in order to take advantage of synergies and resources. This example could be followed by NGOs in the event that they manage to clearly build a 'business case' for cooperation.

- *Favouritism.* Cooperation demands the ability to listen, a good dose of humility and a critical spirit, as well as a certain curiosity toward the other and tolerance of differences, characteristics that are very difficult to find in very personal organisations.

- *An organisational culture adverse to change.* Frequently, the organisations that resist cooperating are those whose organisational culture impedes change and the introduction of new ideas. These organisations, which are lacking creativity and a clear vision, habitually cling to obsolete rules and fear a loss of control.

- *Negative experiences.* Never-ending meetings with no clearly fixed objective, an inability to manage the flow of information generated, frustrated expectations, a lack of tangible results in the short term, communication problems, etc., are experiences often felt in organisations with a lack of professionalism in management. Traditionally, third sector works have been dedicated to these organisations as a second job and/or do not come from the management world. However, more and more organisations are incorporating management professionals.

On the other hand, dynamic forces are observed in the third sector that promote a cooperative culture:

- *The role of complicated problems,* which need to be approached from various vantage points, with interactive and multidisciplinary focuses and whose solution exceeds the capacity of one organisation alone. The multiplication of forums, platforms, and joint campaigns led by various third sector organisations is an example of this phenomenon.

- *The increasing demand for transparency*, for efficient resource use and for the rationalisation of services provided that some financial agencies are beginning to show. Cooperation between civil society organisations is essential to assure greater levels of transparency and to be able to supply insurance processes and a rendering of accounts to those organisations that need it. Cooperation for development is an example that has already begun, systematically, audits and ex-post evaluations to measure the results and impact of the intervention of the organisations.

- *The will and desire of users and beneficiaries of a greater concentration* among the organisations with which they work.

- *Recognition, by public administrations*, of the third sector as a political participant in its own right with which it is necessary to talk, and the need to identify one or several valid interlocutors capable of representing the sector's interests. The recent production of white papers from the civic sector, in Spain but also in other European Union states, highlights not only the increasing interests of public administrations in the non-profit sector but also the surmounting of charity culture.

- *The development of new technologies* and the revolution entailed with regard to information and communication and the impact that these are having on organisational bodies and in the capacity for mobilisation.

2.4.2. Different types of cooperation

The parameters for cooperation used by various civil society entities are different and often vary with regards to the topics with which the organisations work. The motives for cooperation do not vary substantially from those championed by any other type of organisation that expresses its need or desire to form collective entities. Vernis (2004) enumerates the types of cooperation related to the following parameters:

- Timeline. Cooperation can be occasional, for a specific project or programme, or permanent to create common work areas, the creation of forums, platforms, etc.

- Cooperation objectives. Cooperation can be created to improve dialogue, especially among third parties, and achieve a legitimacy in the sector, a coherence of discourse, for example work between second-level structures and also networks, or to develop a collective action plan, such as a campaign.

- Sphere of action. Cooperation can be sector-based and/or territorial, as is the case with second-level structures.

- Level of commitment and dedication of the resources demanded. The possibilities for cooperation are infinite, from simple information circulation or participation in virtual networks to the need to adapt activities, share resources and improve abilities, all of which is done not just for everyone's benefit but also for a common objective.

Cooperation projects are also not static, rather they evolve through time as the participants get to know each other and gain confidence.

Vernis (2004) proposes the following scheme for levels of cooperation. He argues that these cooperation levels vary between two extremes in their commitment level and dedication of resources: operative and strategic cooperation.

- Anecdotal cooperation is based on a reduced timeline and a definite, short-term goal. This requires little effort and a lower commitment level.

- Operative cooperation is that which is formed by NGOs and a supra-organisational institutional platform. This is the case of local or national coordinators. It requires a high level of cooperation but often the degree of involvement by the cooperating NGOs does not have to be as high. They are usually lasting collaborations but do not affect the strategic development of the organisation.

- Strategic Cooperation. This type of cooperation is made when the work objectives of the cooperating organisations converge. This type of cooperation requires fixing very clear strategic goals and coordinating action plans.

- Integral Cooperation: is that in which partners share strategic objectives and the action plans are developed together. Integral cooperation requires a high level of commitment and dedication by the different organisations that create the cooperation.

Graphic: NGO Cooperation Levels

Anecdotal cooperation   Operative cooperation   Strategic cooperation   Integral cooperation
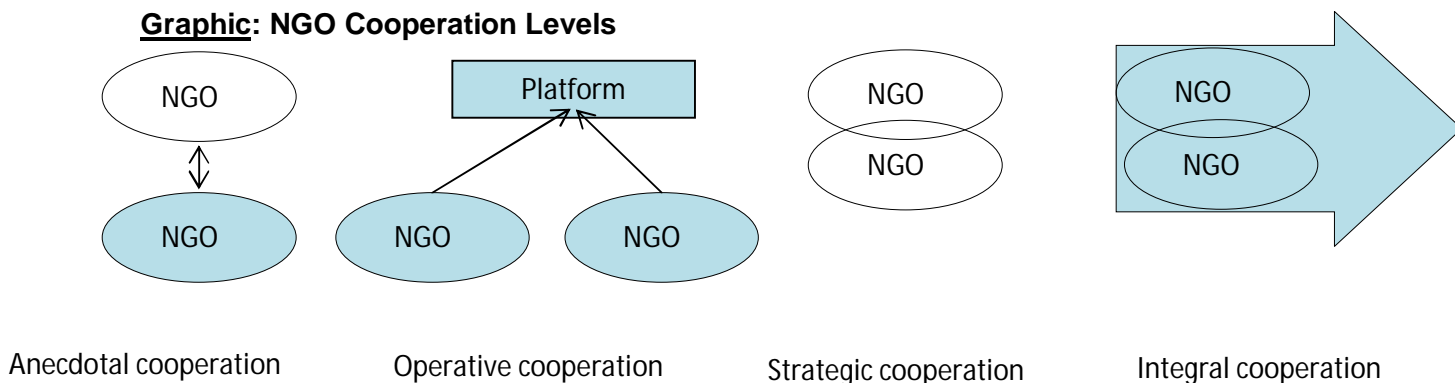
Source: (Vernis 2004)

As happens with any organisation, the cooperation stages do not always evolve linearly nor do they with a simpler type of cooperation. The type of cooperation must be chosen in accordance with the strategic needs of each organisation but also depending on the capabilities and predisposition to work collectively.

2.4.2.1.   Network cooperation

One of the most flexible forms of cooperation, but at the same time the richest with regard to knowledge-gaining levels generated for its members, is cooperation through network creation.

Much has been written about networks and there are both many definitions of networks and debates generated by those definitions. Itriago (2000) argues that a network is characterized by having the following features:

- Being a virtual structure in which there is no virtual hierarchy among its members. Network structures are horizontal and very flexible, allowing in certain cases a temporary association of organisations.

- Networks can integrate structures of different natures and dimensions. We find an example of this in the American forum Independent Sector, which works to promote philanthropy, voluntary service, and non-profit initiatives and social action. The forum encompasses more than 700 American organisations, foundations, non-profit organisations and businesses, all of them committed to the involvement of the people and non-profit development of the third sector.

- Normally, networks have their own objectives, characteristic activities, and are not the result of the sum of the objectives of the members. One of the objectives can be, for example, the creation of political spaces for community organisations to develop their networks.

- Networks are based on the principle of interactivity.

- Generally, this formula is used for information and experience exchange for the benefit of organisations associated with the network.

2.4.2.2.   Second level structures

Second level structures constitute an interesting form of cooperation for those organisations which have similar goals but different territorial spheres of action. These structures are normally agreed upon by coordinators and federations and are created by a group of organisations that need to share knowledge or access to certain political levels such as public administrations.

Coordinators and federations can be territorial and/or sector based. Territorial structures emerge in order to coordinate the actions of different organisations in the same physical sphere. Sector-based structures emerge in order to coordinate the work of entities that share collectives and/or spheres of work, and have similar objectives.

The primary incentives for NGOs to belong to these types of structures are:

- Maintaining contact with other entities

- Exchanging experiences

- Increasing technical capacity

- Obtaining viability, influence and legitimisation

- Obtaining public subsidies

Some of the structures with clearly defined missions have obtained important achievements for the associated organisations and today are well known.

2.5. Civil society cooperation with businesses and international organisations for the development of sustainable consumption.

One of the most studied proposals for the improvement of global governance in regard to sustainable consumption is the development of new collective strategies by the most important NGOs. NGOs often serve as a representative of social worries but also an information diffuser developed for both international organisations and academics. These coalitions and allied efforts should re-open, in the first place, the debate about what is understood by strong sustainable consumption, and whether the work towards this sustainable consumption must be done from the divisions of 'Technology, Industry and Economy' or if it must be treated as a global sociological phenomenon closer to the consumer (Fuchs 2005).

These alliances should work in favour of the development of two-way knowledge transfer: on the one hand, that of the international organisations and academia towards the NGOs in technical and strategic aspects. On the other hand, that of the NGOs towards academia and international organisations to transmit to them not just social values, which are highly changeable and diverse depending on geopolitical and demographic variables, but also implementing strategies.

Various problems arise from this type of alliance: in the first place, problems related to the principles of legitimacy. NGOs are organisations that while they are usually closer to social interests than other organisations such as businesses, they are by definition associations of individuals that do not have a democratic representation in society. NGOs, even those that work with sustainable consumption, often present conflicting programmes and values. The creation of roundtable discussions between NGOs, international organisations and academics could help to improve the understanding and work toward a common agenda for sustainable consumption. However, this requires a great coordination effort and an international entity with a mandate to carry out this effort.

A second obstacle to the NGO–international organisation alliances is the capacity for action due to the shortage of resources. These alliances compete for the value development with large multinational businesses and public institutions that dominate the media, in the case of businesses, and education in the case of public institutions.

Reaching the general public without entering into media management is a very complicated task.

On the other hand, it is necessary for NGOs to make an effort to increase their credibility and transparency, introducing mechanisms for the rendering of accounts in every process and publishing the foundational goals as well as primary donors. Efficiency improvement in project management is also necessary in order to demonstrate that the NGOs can be an important catalyst for change.

3. SITUATION ANALYSIS IN MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES

3.1. Analysis of the Balkans

3.1.1. Regional context in relation to sustainable consumption and production [4]

When we talk about the Balkan area or region in relation to the Mediterranean we are referring to Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. In the case of Montenegro, a good part of the available data is prior to its separation from Serbia in 2006, and therefore for this analysis we will study the two countries together.

No analysis or understanding of the socio-economic situation of this region can be made without referring to the two important events that have taken place in the last 20 years. For one, the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the resulting transition from a centralized public model towards a free market model and secondly the dramatic armed conflicts that resulted from the dismantling of Yugoslavia in favour of the current states.

The fall of the Soviet model in the early '90s brought with it a difficult economic restructuring that was strongly exacerbated by the later conflicts, leading to a regional recession that has only started to improve in the last few years. These structural economic changes might partially reflect the various current consumption models, but the greatest influence has been the growth of international commerce.

The increase of international transactions, especially with the EU, has helped bring a certain level of concern for fitting in with the market requirements and conditions of countries with developed social and environmental policies. However, they are still a long way off both politically and economically from equalling their neighbours from Western Europe. For example, the 'intensity' in energy use or CO_2 emissions in this region are significantly higher than those of the EU, despite having a far lower level of economic activity.

Trends in private consumption

In all of the countries in the region, household consumption is greater than the public spending of the governments, being, nonetheless, far below the EU average. In terms of purchasing power, the consumption capacity for families has recovered from the aforementioned crisis quicker than the GNP, having surpassed levels from 1990 several years ago. If this recovery has had a positive impact on the increase of quality of life or social wellbeing, it has also brought with it a larger and stronger environmental impact.

In many of the region's countries, the proportion of the population living below the poverty line is still considerable and many, especially in rural areas, do not have access to basic needs such as drinking water, fuel or sufficient food. By contrast, the

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[4] From the following reports: **EEA Report (2007)**, Sustainable Consumption and Production in South East Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia – UNEP & EEA

UNEP/EEA (2007), Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe'
Belgrade, Serbia 10-12 October 2007

growth of the urban middle class and the appearance of a small but growing upper class that is adopting less-sustainable western consumption models stands out.

While food and textiles are the two categories that dominate household consumption, energy consumption, appliances, transportation and communication are segments that are experiencing a strong growth.

A recognizable trend is that of the growing levels of urbanisation. This creates a dilemma in regard to greater environmental impact from the increased water and electrical consumption, waste generation, transport, etc., which are noted, in turn, as signs of population wellbeing.

Ecological footprint vs. available global bio-capacity per capita (2003)

Source: Global Footprint Network, 2006
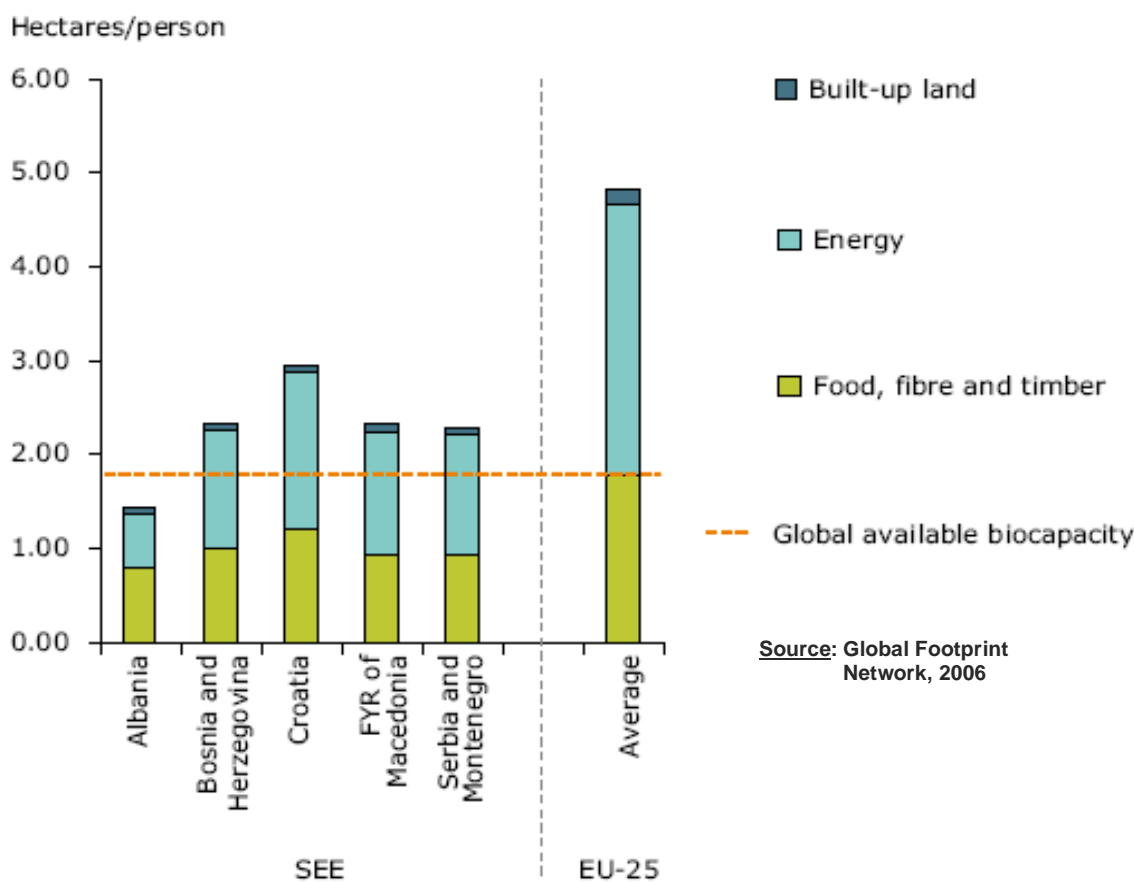
Development of Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies

In contrast to the EU's approach to these policies, focusing on consumption reduction, in the Balkan states policy should focus on improving the efficiency of production, consumption and use of resources. On the other hand, the economic restructuring that is taking place in these states offers a unique opportunity to guide consumption models towards sustainability, before they reach the excessive levels of Western Europe.

Despite the acquired strategic agreements and political declarations of recent years that include sustainable consumption and production as a public goal, so far few significant initiatives have been started by these states.

Among the various reasons which explain this, are a weak perception of the consumption problem by some governments and the limited or difficult interdepartmental and inter-sector coordination.

Public spending, estimated between 5% and 15% of the GNP of each country, is shown to be a very useful tool in bringing about positive changes both for the environment and the country's economy. However, it has only been during the last few years that pilot initiatives from the administrations, such as cleaner, energy-efficient and eco-technological production centres, have begun to appear.

The challenges to be faced over the next few years include involving businesses in environmental management and a commitment to the responsible consumption and sustainable production policies. Furthermore, the development of legislation and, most importantly, compliance with it have been shown, together with other efforts like starting processes to introduce clean technologies or the promotion of consumption- and natural-resource saving services, to be the key factors in reaching a favourable environmental and socioeconomic situation.

Important areas in consumption

Food production and consumption

The major problems in the economic area of consumption and production mainly originate from agricultural practices. The centralized system of the Soviet era in which strategic or political reasons were predominant over efficiency and the fact that farmers' incomes did not depend directly on crop yield, caused a serious imbalance between the yield of the soil, the need for resources (water, fuel and labour) and farming productivity. This situation has deteriorated during the years of armed conflict due to a lack of resources and institutional support, as well as migration from rural areas to the city.

The environmental deterioration caused by these policies and conflicts, has limited the capacity to produce food, which in turn leads to non-sustainable food consumption and production that feed back into the environmental deterioration.

The consequent problems of salinity, soil erosion and water pollution continue, due to bad irrigation management, the absence of legislation regarding the treatment and collection of purines and lack of planning.

This lack of agricultural development creates good opportunities to promote organic or ecological agriculture thanks to the small but increasing use of pesticides and fertilizers, the large number of farms and the great availability of farm labour. One way or another, it would be necessary to make a strong effort towards raising awareness and education regarding this kind of agriculture among the population, defined financial and educational support for the farmers and a well-defined and regulated policy.

Building and residence consumption

The energy consumption that comes from public, private and commercial buildings is very significant, accounting in many cases for around a third of the country's total consumption. The availability of cheap energy, the lack of efficient insulation and the cold climate work in favour of such consumption.

Another point of attention is high water consumption, both cold and hot, in households. The primary causes derive from a lack of incentives for consumption reduction, a consequence of the lack of information in this regard, the artificially low rates and the

absence of meters and, therefore, payment according to the quantity consumed (in many households a fixed amount is paid regardless of consumption).

The reconstruction, restoration and construction of homes, which has increased in recent years, provides a great opportunity to alleviate the problem of domestic water and electricity consumption thanks to the new designs and materials conceived to provide an increase in thermal efficiency, as well as the savings derived from the concentration of homes in blocks instead of individual ones. Obstacles appear in the form of insufficient funding, the absence of instruments that promote energy efficiency and a lack of legislation and regulation in this regard.

Transport

The current economic growth combined with the adoption of the Western model by the middle and upper classes has caused a rapid increase in the number of private vehicles with a corresponding effect on energy consumption and pollutant gas emissions. The deterioration of the public transport system resulting from a lack of public investment also has to be added to the previous factors, making a trend change very difficult. Additionally, in some of the countries, fuel is of low quality and price, which multiplies the pollutant effect.

Once more, legislation and promotion from public administrations are being presented as the best way of controlling this problem, using public transport investment measures, improvements in the infrastructure, the creation of bus or tram lanes, etc.

Waste management

This is one of the region's major problems due to both its environmental and social impact. At an industrial level, waste generation in the region is very high, basically due to large-scale mining and processing industries. A large part of this waste is hazardous and highly pollutant, and only a small fraction is treated according to environmental criteria. The economic growth is, in itself, generating a constant waste increase, especially in industry although also in the municipalities.

Practically all of the municipal waste is buried and deposited in legal or illegal dumps that do not have adequate systems. Recycling, incineration or the reuse of rubble or waste materials is very infrequent, but countries such as Croatia are beginning to consider these matters.

Opportunities

The present social and economic restructuring of the region offers a unique opportunity to establish more efficient and safer consumption and production models while at the same time improving the welfare of the population. Some elements of the Soviet past such as the railway infrastructure or community heating systems could be very useful in promoting more sustainable models.

The keys to success in sustainable consumption and production measures are held in the development of national policies and strategies, the compliance with said policies and the raising of public awareness.

3.1.2. Sustainable Consumption and Civil Society [5]

3.1.2.1. Typology of the organisations and promoters

There are notable differences among the five countries that comprise the Balkan-Mediterranean region as far as civil society organisations are concerned, both in number and in activity. The recent years, in tandem with economic growth, have favoured a trend toward associating with and joining organisations of various types that had not been able to grow during the years of conflict for reasons that were direct (lack of resources) and indirect (fear of repression). This increase in civil society organisations has not always been associated with an increase in resources, which is why we can find a large number of organisations that count solely on a few volunteers and a lot of motivation.

Perhaps because they have been created so recently, many of the social organisations focus on the most recent local and international problems, highlighted by the large number of NGOs dedicated to the environment and climate change. If it is true that this is an important topic for these countries given the severe impact it entails, in many cases there is a sense of specialisation and awareness on the same level of countries in Western Europe. No doubt the opening up to surrounding European countries has favoured a transfer of information and experiences that has markedly enriched local movements.

Among the organisations that deal with the topic of sustainable consumption and production, leaving aside government agencies and institutions, those that come from a **social community field** (local associations, eco-tourism promoters, etc.) stand out, as well as those that work in the **environmental field**, the latter being the most numerous and important.

Consumer defence organisations, however, rarely include the concept of sustainable consumption in their projects, still being in a process of consolidation (generally they are new creations) and more centred on the education of the population regarding their rights, lawsuits with vendors, etc.

In general terms, sustainable consumption is therefore associated with the defence and preservation of the environment, and it is promoted together with other initiatives as a way of maintaining biodiversity, reducing the indiscriminate use of natural resources, and so on.

3.1.2.2. Initiative Categorisation

When it comes to analysing and grouping initiatives related to sustainable consumption in the Balkan-Mediterranean area, it is worth mentioning that the differences between the various countries that make up the region combined with the characteristics of each organisation result in a wide spectrum of distinct initiatives. However, the majority of these can be grouped into blocks in accordance with their goals, the public at whom they are aimed and the primary topic on which they are based.

The three main lines into which the most important initiatives developed by civil society organisation in the Balkans are divided are as follows:

a) **Promotion, education and public awareness**
This section contains the initiatives that hope to raise awareness and disseminate the concept of sustainable consumption among organisations,

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[5] Information obtained from a personal investigation using primary and secondary sources.

administrations, businesses and citizens. This is the most common type of initiative in all of the countries in the area, with the evident logic of 'starting from the beginning' and because of the small financing and structure necessary for putting it into practice. Focusing a little more on the nature of these initiatives, we would be able to distinguish between the publicity campaigns, training and education programmes aimed at children and young people as well as experts and academics in related fields, consultancy projects and/or pressuring of public administrations to create or improve corresponding legislation, and a long list of activities similar to those stated. As an example, we can mention the summer camp that is prepared by the Slovenian organisation **Slovenski E-Forum**, based on the theme of energy and aimed at students and young professionals. Under the title **'Integral Energetics'**, the initiative tries to train these young people in everything related to energy use and its environmental impact, placing special emphasis on renewable energies, the rational use and conservation of resources, or the correlation between energy consumption abuse and climate change.

b) **Putting sustainability criteria into practice**
In this case, it is initiatives that are designed to show the viability of applying sustainable consumption or production criteria, both to the general public and businesses or other organisations. Given the normally higher cost, due to the complexity of its planning and execution, these initiatives are much less frequent and are tied to specific subjects that might be particularly important to their target group. So, for example there have been awareness-raising campaigns for recycling and waste collection in all of the countries, in response to a serious existing problem in many of the cities (lack of collection, smell, degradation of public spaces, etc.) which therefore led to a significant increase in public awareness in regard to this matter in particular. At the other end of the spectrum, we can find initiatives designed to reduce fossil fuel consumption such as changing to renewable energies through the installation of solar panels or the '**day without cars**' initiative organized by **EkoMreza** in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

c) **Eco-tourism or ecological tourism**
While these types of initiatives could have been included in the previous section, there are specific characteristics that suggest a different treatment. Almost all of these initiatives have a dual purpose. To be more respectful of the environment, promote responsible consumption, sustainable uses, etc., but also in order to promote the arrival of tourists and income generation. From this perspective there is a business investment component that does not exist in any other initiative studied. In fact, these projects can be found in the middle ground between an environmental focus and community sustainable development, and on many occasions they are carried out with the participation of other agents as well as the NGOs. Examples of this are the **Bijambare** holiday complex in Bosnia, or **Prokletije's** sustainable tourism project in the mountains of Serbia, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Co-operation.

3.1.2.3. How they work/Networks

The five countries analysed in this study are found within the geographic and economic levels of South-eastern Europe. This area also includes countries without access to the Mediterranean such as Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Although there is a certain amount of diversity with regard to the networks that operate in the region, the two main networks work in countries in South East Europe (SEE).

- **The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)** has been possibly the largest and most important environmental network in the region since its creation in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. As an independent, non-profit organisation, its mission is to promote cooperation between non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental 'stakeholders', supporting free information exchange and public participation in environmental decision-making processes. Among the programmes and projects that it develops, the most notable areas are training, environmental policy, information bank, NGO support and climate change. It has grown over the years to include centres in 17 countries in the region, as well as in central Hungary, and standard form agreements signed by 29 countries in the region.

- **The Balkan Environmental Association (BENA)**. More modest and recent, this non-governmental, non-profit association formed in 1998 has its headquarters in Greece, and works with the Balkan states. Among its primary objectives are examining and tackling environmental problems in the region, advising regulatory bodies regarding environmental policies, coordinating various countries and their local organisations to reduce environmental impact and creating common strategies, organizing scientific events, and developing environmental quality management systems. Until now, they have centred their initiatives on research, preparation of informative events, report publishing and the coordination of projects with international institutions, businesses and public administrations.

Although their activities are not limited to the Balkans or southeastern Europe, but rather to the Mediterranean, we cannot fail to mention the **MIO-ECSDE** network, based in Greece, inasmuch as part of their activities includes the countries analysed in this study. In this case, it is a federation of organisations pertaining to a large part of the Mediterranean states. The activities that are carried out in various areas of sustainability and the environment are of special interest. The organisation stands out for being present at all forums or events related to the subject in question in the Mediterranean, and is a notably active driving force.

3.2. Analysis of the Middle East

By the region of the Middle East – Mediterranean, we understand those western Asiatic countries that also have access to the Mediterranean Sea and are included in the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). From south to north, they are Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. In the case of Egypt (halfway between Asia and Africa), its classification in this group complies with the cultural and social characteristics shared with the Arab Asian states. In fact, in the traditional division of the Arab world between the Maghreb (Northern Africa) and Mashrek (Middle East) regions, it is included in the second. Turkey, often considered a European country, is nonetheless much closer to its Asiatic neighbours in regard to the development of its sustainable production and consumption policies, and the presence of civil society organisations.

3.2.1. Regional context in relation to sustainable consumption and production [6]

Socio-economic situation

Following the decades of industrial-development-first-and-never-mind-social-and-environmental-issues of the '70s and '80s, the last 10 to 15 years have reflected a step forward in the majority of the countries in the region, with notable improvements in the fields of health, education, the role of civil society, and gender equality. However, the widespread demographic explosion and economic fluctuations derived from a strong dependence on foreign markets, has created an increase in poverty and unemployment that would be very difficult to resolve in the short-term. Also, there are serious political and territorial conflicts between the regional states that impede reaching a certain stability from which sustainable development can 'advance'. As with many other places, the recent decades have reflected strong migratory flows from rural areas to the cities, with the resulting economic and social imbalances (unemployment, the fall of agriculture), as well as notable environmental impact of urbanisation, greater food requirements, growing industrial and municipal waste production, the expansion of marginalized areas, insufficient service infrastructures, and so on.

The region's economic growth is subject to continuous cyclical fluctuations as a consequence of the changing international energy price and other natural resources (the region is heavily dependent on exports) which, when combined with unequal wealth and service distribution, prevents homogeneous and continual development, especially among the more underprivileged groups like women and children.

Population growth in Arab countries (1950 – 2007 – 2050).

Source: UNPD, World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision
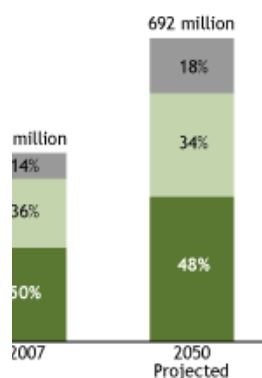
Civil society organisations' part is still small and centred on dealing with services not provided by the government. In this respect, the growth of these organisations in number and importance will be a deciding factor, and their role will change towards being social representatives and pressure groups to the government and businesses.

Trends and problems related to consumption

Oil and gas production, and non-renewable natural resource extraction

The region's significant oil and mineral reserves are the primary driving force for regional economy and at the same time the largest obstacle to diversifying income sources and moving towards a sustainable economy. The mining industry and industrial processing of minerals and metal has increased noticeably, causing a serious environmental impact on water and air quality, as well as the coasts, affected by a

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[6] From the following texts: **UN–ESCWA (2002)** Summary of the world summit on sustainable development: assessment report for the ESCWA region.

UN–ESCWA (2003) Review of sustainable development and productivity activities

sharp increase in pollutant waste. Moreover, the centralisation of the economy has boosted migration from rural areas towards industrial areas, increasing their need for a better transport services infrastructure. Fortunately, some governments have begun to promote changes in this trend, favouring more rational environmental systems, and creating cleaner production centres such as those in Egypt or Lebanon, which comply with the European Union's environmental requirements. Furthermore, they are spreading initiatives for replacing part of the oil consumption with natural gas consumption.

Industrial development

The region's industrial sector has not been brought sufficiently up to date technologically, in the creation of added value or knowledge management, being based on high-energy consumption and labour. In addition to the corresponding environmental impact that this consumption produces, this industrial model prevents small and medium-sized companies from competing in the international markets or facing up to the growing competition of the domestic market. In addition, the lack of modern technology causes large quantities of pollutant industrial waste.

The medium-sized and small companies, especially in manufacturing, have been specialising in products with good foreign sales like cement, chemicals, plastic and electrical machinery. While this is positive for the diversification of the economy, it also creates risks based on the environmental and health impact that these small industries can generate. In order to improve the conditions and efficiency of these industries, various regional states have created and provided industrial centres which are separated from the cities where they can rationalize energy consumption and waste collection and treatment. However, these initiatives present a new problem due to the impact on natural resources and the land that urbanisation brings.

Agricultural development

In spite of the trends of recent years, agriculture continues to be an important part of the regional economy, and is considered by a number of the regional states as a key sector that permits a certain degree of food safety and self-sufficiency in staple products. The protectionist system of water subsidies for irrigation and agrarian chemical products, however, is still customary, reinforcing unsustainable production models. More than 80% of the available water resources in the region are directed to this sector of the economy, conflicting with the increasing demand for this precious commodity in cities as a result of internal migration and population growth. Additionally, this protectionism, together with the increased use of pesticides and fertilizers, prevents the region from competitively entering international markets, and adapting to the new trends brought about by the globalisation of the markets, representing a great burden to possible free trade agreements.

Tourism

Despite the growth of the last decade, the tourism industry continues to be a small part of the region. However, the potential of this sector as an income source suggests detailed planning in the interest of preserving heritage, natural resources and the coasts. While it cannot be said that today the unsustainable practices related to tourism present a serious problem, there are no means or guidelines that prepare the region for an eventual demand increase.

Transport

The number of vehicles has not stopped growing in recent decades throughout the entire region. In production countries, the low cost of oil acts as a disincentive to

purchasing low-consumption or more efficient vehicles or machines, thereby creating a high level of air pollution from fuel. Additionally, in many countries in the region, vehicles are very old, with more than 60% of vehicles more than 10 years old in Egypt and Syria, for example, and more than 20% of vehicles at least 24 years old. In recent years, however, many of these countries have adjusted their prices, which should produce a trend change towards less polluting vehicles, and they have begun to take measures to alleviate the pollution problem in cities (promoting natural gas vehicles in Egypt, or prohibiting diesel vehicles in cities in Lebanon). The use and creation of infrastructure has grown in all fields (roads, railway lines, airports), helping create a higher transport efficiency but in many cases affecting natural spaces.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation has been growing non-stop, causing severe environmental impact on natural resources, land and coastal areas. Waste generation, wastewater and air pollution are possibly the most serious problems, but there are also more recent problems such as the destruction of marine life due to coastal urbanisation, or the proliferation of informal settlements without access to basic resources close to cities and industrial centres.

Regional consumption patterns

The least sustainable indicator is **energy** consumption. The information is not very representative due to the large differences in consumption between countries, as well as between rural and urban areas. Although the energy consumption of the region is close to the world average, around 30% of the rural population (in the most remote or inaccessible areas) do not have access to electricity, while in the cities the demand has not stopped increasing. In fact, even though almost the entire urban population has access to electricity and fuel, the quality of this access in many cases is inadequate and unsustainable. In general, the energy sector in almost all of the regional states continues to be inefficient and underdeveloped. As for supply, there have been heavy investments to promote the use of natural gas instead of oil and recently initiatives have been enacted in order to obtain solar and wind energy.

Regarding the **production and consumption of industrial goods and products**, the demographic and economic increases have caused a sharp increase in internal consumption, with the resulting problems of waste generation and pollutant and hazardous waste. Despite the fact that some countries have set up recycling and waste treatment programmes, the lack of information and public awareness, along with the absence of incentives have detracted from the importance of the initiatives. Adapting to the environmental requirements of packing and shipping products to western countries has not helped to establish the same requirements on a domestic level; rather they have helped 'unsustainable' products to become commercialized internally and within the region.

In the case of **water**, there are notable differences among states in the Middle East, which are not the countries under consideration that are most affected by the scarcity of this natural resource. Even so, the growing competition between the demand of the cities and agricultural uses, a problem of scarcity has arisen that has grown worse through the overexploitation of wells, lack of adequate administration and planning, and the limited and erratic rains. In recent years various regional governments have begun to treat the problem not only from a supply perspective (increasing) but also from a demand perspective, trying to make the population aware of the scarcity of the resource and of the need to control and ration consumption. Unfortunately, these initiatives have not been very successful given the lack of technical and financial means to put them into practice, as well as the small amount of information available.

3.2.2. Sustainable Consumption and Civil Society[7]

3.2.2.1. Typology of the organisations and promoters

The Mediterranean Middle East as a whole has gone through periods of great instability mainly caused by political and armed conflicts that, in some cases, are still alive. Consequently, the disparity between the five countries that make up this study is more than noticeable. In Egypt, for example, there are a multitude of civil society organisations dedicated to all kinds of activities and social ends, while in Syria or Turkey they are less numerous and more linked to economic or recreational activities. Lebanon has a certain associative attitude that definitely favours the profusion of international organisations that have worked in the country as a result of the armed conflict of the 1980s. Israel is a separate case that in fact has an economic and social development clearly distinguishable from the surrounding countries. In this country the major influences come from other regions, especially industrialized countries like the USA or the European Union. In spite of a much more comfortable economic situation, the environmental problems in Israel are not that different from those of its neighbours, fundamentally because of a lack of commitment by the administration and the low level of public awareness.

With regard to the civil society organisations that promote sustainable consumption, there is no reference to organisations that are exclusively or primarily dedicated to this subject in the region. However, in contrast, a good part of the **environmental** organisations consider this a priority, and try to incorporate it in their campaigns. In other cases, the exceptions, there are organisations that promote **sustainable development** as a part of the fight against social inequality and marginalisation, and treat sustainable consumption and production in specific cases such as recycling or family finances.

Consumer associations, often very newly founded, are focused primarily on the defence of consumer rights and civic education on applicable legislation, although some claim to include the promotion of sustainable consumption among their programmes.

In general, the inherent concept of sustainable consumption is rather unknown in society, and therefore there is little public awareness of this issue. In short, and given the situation in many developing areas, the current state of sustainable consumption promotion by civil society organisations is scarce and specific, and is primarily endorsed by environmental defence and preservation organisations. However, it is hoped that the recent addition of sustainable consumption and production to government agendas (in general without a practical application for consumption at the moment) will enable the appearance of new organisations centred on sustainable consumption and/or the inclusion of the subject by those already in existence.

3.2.2.2. Initiative Categorization

A common denominator among all the regional states as far as developed initiatives is concerned is education, training and dissemination of the concept of sustainable consumption and all it entails. However, there are very different approaches, probably on the basis of the public goals of the initiatives and the degree of acceptance that they might have. So, for example, while in Turkey and Syria the awareness and training campaigns are focused on getting to know the concept and raising public awareness of environmental problems, in Egypt the Arab Office for Youth and Environment (**AOYE)** has opened a citizen service helpline in order to answer queries, receive notification or

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[7] Information obtained based on own research using primary and secondary sources.

complaints and inform people about topics including environmental, energy, water conservation, etc.

Other noteworthy campaigns would be, for example, **sustainable streets** in Cairo, in which a city street is chosen and worked on with the community, service providers, shopkeepers, etc. The goal is to make it sustainable in as many aspects as possible; and perhaps promote cultural and social autonomy values, with adapted consumption patterns that provide a certain level of self-sufficiency and greater health and food safety.

The **Heschel Centre** in Israel is dedicated to training and education on environmental issues for individuals, professionals and trainers, and has developed a full programme dedicated to sustainable consumption (**New Horizons)**. This programme aims to pressure the government to incorporate sustainability criteria in its agenda through the creation of lobbies formed by conscientious citizens and professionals.

Another fairly extensive focus is centred on agriculture, and the development of sustainability criteria for the consumption of natural resources (water, energy) and for the use of pesticides and chemicals. Some initiatives in this field hope to achieve rural development, reducing costs through renewable energy consumption or the incorporation of technology, while others aim at a certain **ecological agriculture** and the promotion of **fair trade** in the case of **Green Line** in Lebanon.

As for natural resources and energy efficiency, there are multiple initiatives mainly directed toward energy efficiency through more efficient consumption, the incorporation of **renewable energies** (solar, biofuels), construction **efficiency** (Lebanon), or water conservation by avoiding leaks and waste.

Lastly, an issue that affects all the states in the region and is a recurring theme among the problems mentioned by organisations is that of waste, litter, ruins, pollution, etc. In the majority of these countries the topic is breached by public awareness campaigns, demonstrative initiatives for recycling and the encouragement of the consumption of reusable goods. In Egypt, the **Association for Protection of the Environment** (APE) is dedicated almost exclusively to the problems from social work with the people who live on the rubbish and waste. Given the serious problem of the huge amount of rubbish that the city of Cairo generates and a marginalized population that lives on it, the organisation came up with a series of initiatives designed to 'improve the status' of these people (the majority are women and children), making better use of the rubbish they collect. To do this, it created a local centre that educated the collectors in the **segregation and recycling** of the rubbish, creating more profitable alternatives such as the production of small products (baskets, fabrics, etc.) from recycled material, which are then converted into income through their subsequent marketing.

3.2.2.3.   How they work/ networks

There is no local network that works with all of the countries in the region, primarily due to the different current policies among them. So for example, networks that belong to Israeli organisations are not from the region, but usually North American. The way in which the countries form into networks is, in fact, cultural. The majority of the current networks refer to the Arab world, more than a geographic region, and therefore group together with countries of different regions.

Perhaps the most active network is the Arab Network for Environment and Development (ANED), created and directed by an Egyptian NGO (AOYE). Among the Arab countries, another network that is present is CEDARE, Centre for Environment and Development of the Arab Region and Europe.

Turkey, geographically a part of Europe, forms a part of the Regional Environment Centre for Eastern and Central Europe (REC), and we have already referred to them in the Balkans analysis.

3.3. Analysis of the Maghreb

By the Maghreb-Mediterranean region we mean those countries of Northern Africa that belong to the traditional Arabic division of Maghreb, and have a coast along the Mediterranean Sea. There are four such countries (Egypt having been considered part of the Middle East): Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.

3.3.1. Regional context in relation to sustainable consumption and production [8]

Socio-economic situation

Generally, the socioeconomic context of the region in consideration shares a number of similarities with the previously described Middle East Mediterranean area; therefore we will only be making explicit reference to those factors and situations that are specific to the region. If this group of countries has experienced a different history from those of the Middle East, especially regarding armed conflicts, it is no less true that the group brings together countries which are very different from each other. Libya stands out for its foreign policy and its lack of participation in regional or international networks on sustainable development.

Over the last three decades of the past century, the Maghreb region witnessed profound socioeconomic transformations as a result of a massive industrialisation and modernisation process put into practice by various governments. Just as in the Middle East, these processes brought with them serious economic, social and environmental imbalances that in many cases are still awaiting resolution. The dramatic population increase and continual migration from rural areas to the city have created serious internal pressures from poverty, scarcity of some resources and the intensive use of others.

Ranking among the primary points to be resolved in these countries are poverty and social inequality, unemployment, high levels of contamination and pollution, strengthening civil society, and political and economic stability.

However, it is worth noting that the Mediterranean Maghrebi states have made a serious effort to implement environmental development and protection policies, which are in some cases the forerunners within the Arab world. The last few years have seen a strong commitment to achieving economic growth that is respectful of the environment and to drawing closer to European countries both in joint policies and in a forward-looking approach.

Although civil society organisations' part is often prominent, it is equally true that the governments themselves have assumed responsibility for applying measures in pursuit of sustainable development, either through the inclusion of related policies in their

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[8] From the following texts: **The World Bank (1995)** Middle East and North Africa Environmental Strategy: Towards Sustainable Development, Report No. 13601-MNA

The World Bank (2001) Middle East and North Africa Region Environment Strategy Update 2001-2005

ministerial programmes or through the creation of specialized agencies such as cleaner production centres (Morocco and Tunisia), ecological labelling (Tunisia) or agencies focused on the rationalisation of energy consumption.

Trends and problems related to consumption

Industry and Energy.

The years of industrialisation and the subsequent economic growth of the area, especially between the 1970s and the '90s did not feature among its denominators the search for energy optimisation or the minimalizing of waste generation and pollution. The main reason lies in the lack of local incentives, unstable foreign market relations and a minimal public budget dedicated to such issues. Despite a number of countries in the region such as Morocco or Tunisia, maintaining similar levels of intense energy consumption to the West and therefore not facing the same problems as those of the Middle East, the quality of this consumption and the lack of control measures have caused extremely high levels of air pollution, mostly resulting from the energy inefficiency of industry and the sharp increase in transport. On the other hand, much of this pollution comes from the soil and water, where heavy metals and other highly contaminating agents have been found in quantities far above the acceptable level for human health.

% Annual tax increase
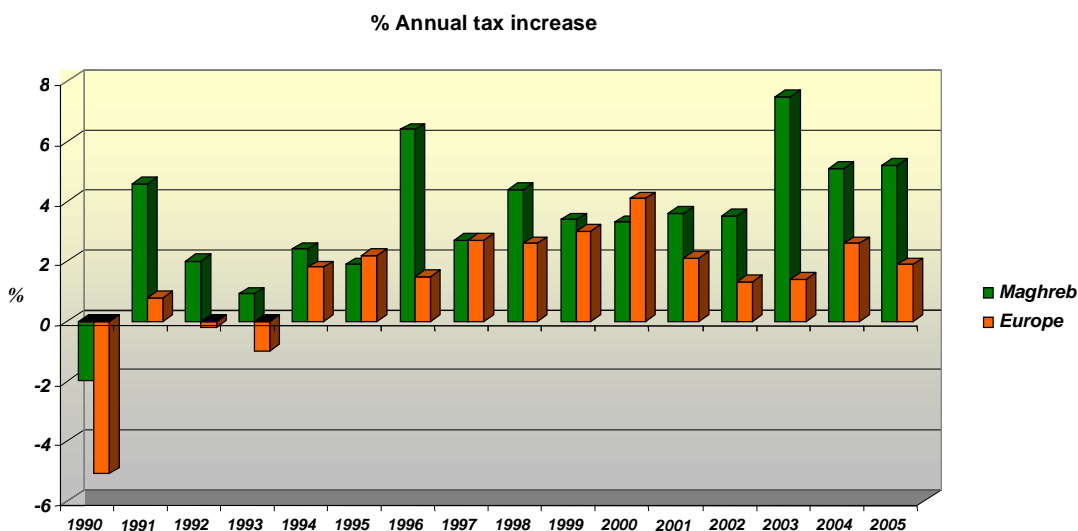
Source: United Nations Statistics Division

Water

Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia all possess water reserves which are significantly greater than the surrounding countries. However, the intensive consumption of this resource, mainly in agriculture, aggravated by its low price relative to the cost of obtaining it, creates a shortage problem in the medium and long-term, especially considering that the exploitation of most of the water reserves produces an economic loss.

A more serious problem is water quality. The lack of treatment for domestic and industrial dumping which goes directly to the rivers and Mediterranean coast, the intensive use of pesticides and other chemicals that leach down to aquifers, and the lack of government regulatory measures have been creating an unsustainable situation in which only a small amount of the water available is suitable for human consumption. The Mediterranean coasts have also suffered the consequences of pollution, losing biodiversity.

Erosion and desertification

A particularly serious problem in the Maghreb states is erosion and desertification, which affect (to a greater or lesser extent) large parts of their territories. The primary causes can be found in economic, political and institutional factors, such as deforestation, the intensive and inadequate use of agriculture and cattle rearing to achieve self-sufficiency (subsidies), converting pastures into crop fields, inefficient use and abuse of water, lack of clarity regarding the ownership of the lands, and so on.

This land degradation also has direct costs: a negative impact on poverty, environmental integrity, quantity and quality of water reserves and tourism. In fact, the change of natural water flows as a consequence of soil erosion directly affects certain marine species due to the smaller quantity of fresh water that reaches the sea, reducing available fishing and crustacean reserves for local Maghrebi fishermen.

Urbanisation

As in the majority of Arab countries, the Maghreb region has experienced high urban growth as a result of demographic explosion, internal migration and industrial development. Among the primary consequences of this massive urbanisation are the exponential increase in pollution, waste, marginalisation, lack of water quality, disappearance of green spaces and the deterioration of coastal areas. A unique situation in the Maghreb is that of the 'medinas', the old quarters of the cities and the true driving force of urban commerce. The unbridled urban growth has caused these areas to be overpopulated, impoverished and heavily limited by the construction of new buildings in their traditional locations.

Transport

While the governments of the Maghreb states have taken measures to solve the problems derived from transport, in many respects the situation is similar to the eastern Arab states. The increase in the number of vehicles combined with their obsolescence and therefore low energy efficiency has been and continues to be a source of particularly serious environmental pollution in urban areas.

Tourism

There are two clearly distinct settings for tourism in the Maghreb states. On one hand, Morocco and Tunisia have a long tradition of international tourism that has not stopped growing in recent decades, while in Algeria and Libya tourism is, at this time, largely undeveloped. This second situation creates good opportunities for the development of the sector with a sustainable focus, since there is hardly any tourism infrastructure. In Morocco and Tunisia, coastal deterioration brought about by tourism urbanisation is clear. As an important income source, tourist activity has been exploited up to now without considering social or environmental consequences, generating imbalances and excessive consumption that affect large areas of the country.

Governmental policies and current trends.

As we mentioned at the beginning of the analysis, Maghrebi countries, are characterized by modern initiatives aimed at sustainable consumption and environmental protection. In this way, not only have they joined with the main international treaties and protocols, but they have also put a series of innovative measures into practice in various fields.

In the field of energy, for example, a number of countries have started programmes for the promotion of renewable energy, control and regulation of deforestation related to energy acquisition, and the promotion of the use of natural gas and electricity instead of oil and its derivatives. To do this, they have created specialized agencies for the promotion of rational energy use as well as for gaining access to eco-efficiency technologies.

Transport is also taking measures designed to modernize both vehicles and the infrastructure, gradually deregulating those areas of the sector that depend on the government, circulating among the population the importance of public transport and raising public awareness of the increasing pollution caused by indiscriminate vehicle use in the city.

Other important aspects such as the population, access to healthcare and settlement policies are being treated the same by the different governments, through measures adapted to each country but in agreement in regard to public awareness campaigns. Also, the governments have incorporated programmes designed to protect natural spaces, to fight against deforestation, and desertification, and so on into their agendas.

What can be felt in all these initiatives is a will to change and adjust on the part of regional executives, which is making itself clear in some cases through joint regional initiatives and even international programmes with European countries (primarily France). Perhaps one of the main weaknesses is the lack of autonomy and presence of civil society organisations, which are often left out of government projects and continue to receive minimal support.

3.3.2. Sustainable Consumption and Civil Society[9]

3.3.2.1. Typology of the organisations and promoters

As we commented previously, a key aspect of the Maghreb states with regard to social development is the limited presence of civil society organisations, both in number and in capacity for action. The promotion of sustainable development, along with sustainable consumption and production is in the hands of the government and the agencies created by it. Highlighting a few of the agencies, we find the International Centre for Environmental Technologies of Tunisia (www.citet.nat.tn), created as a reference for businesses and citizens interested in adapting to eco-efficient energy, or The Information Centre on Sustainable Energy and Environment (www.ciede.org.ma) in Morocco. There are even initiatives from the corporate sphere, such as the 'Fibre Citoyenne' project, which, with the support of the French Foreign Affairs Ministry is trying to create an international network between various Maghreb states and Europe for fair trade and social responsibility of textiles.

All in all, civil society organisations in the Maghreb states are in general in the early stages, especially where sustainability is concerned. The traditional systems of government have not helped independent organisations to develop and establish themselves. Moreover, given the geography of the region, the great disparity between rural and urban areas and the scant available resources, many of the organisations are focused on small regions and the problems they present, basing their work on community participation for detecting local problems and proposing solutions. In many cases the organisations that include sustainable consumption among their initiatives do so from the **development** prism, looking for consumption alternatives that serve for community saving or that preserve natural resources. Another important factor is the

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[9] Information obtained from personal investigation of primary and secondary sources.

organisations' access to communication. Those that have web pages or even Internet access are in the minority, limiting their capacity for mobilisation and circulation to the areas where they work. Even so, the number of organisations that have been formed in recent years is significant, as is the task of raising awareness that they are doing even if it is on a local level. It is hoped that before long, provided the political and economic stability continue, they will become more consolidated and their role will become more and more relevant to the societies to which they belong.

Consumer organisations, as in the Middle East, have not been thoroughly developed and focus their objectives on consumer education and information regarding their rights and local legislation. One consumer rights organisation worth mentioning is Tunecina (ODC), which publishes the magazine *Le consommateur tunisien*, where it points out aspects of sustainable consumption as a consideration to keep in mind in the future.

3.3.2.2. Initiative Categorisation

The main sustainable consumption initiatives developed by civil society are logically centred on local problems in their field. For this reason there is a certain disparity among the initiatives that could be misleading about their number and the impact they have among the population. The reality is that they are usually modest initiatives, directed at small communities and with very limited funds. Initiatives have been put into action that are designed to achieve energy consumption savings, get natural water sources at low cost in mountainous zones (High Atlas in Morocco), improve agricultural yields through more rational and lower cost uses, start waste collection and recycling campaigns, etc. In the field of awareness, initiatives such as the national programme **sustainable university cities** (which looks for sustainability from individuals to the community) are worth mentioning, or the campaign in favour of using bicycles instead of cars, both enacted by the association Women for Sustainable Development (Tunisia), in French, Femmes pour le Développement Durable **(**FDD).

However, there are also a few organisations with a greater capacity for action (**APNEK in Tunisia**) that are present on the Internet. They have specialized and surrounded themselves with experts in the fields of environment, energy, water, etc., and they prepare reports and studies, consult with the corresponding government departments, organize and join national and international events, and all in all, provide a certain degree of social coverage and dissemination of sustainable consumption and production. These organisations are those that, in a way, assume the work of informing and educating on sustainable consumption at a national level, while the more numerous small organisations do so at the community levels where they operate.

Lastly, and though it does not deal with initiatives carried out by civil society organisations, we cannot leave out some of the projects that have been enacted by public institutions, because they are innovative and promising for the region. Added to the agencies listed in the previous point are **eco-labelling** created by the Tunisian government agency '**Tunisian Ecolabel**', located in the Moroccan Centre for Cleaner Production, the CPM, **clean development mechanisms**, with Internet circulation.

3.3.2.3. How to work/Networks

Being Arab countries, the Maghreb states form a part of the networks mentioned in the section on the Middle East and those we have already referred to in this section. In addition to these, there is a Maghrebi network, 'Forum Maghrebin pour l'Environnement et le Développement', and another for the African sphere, ENDA, centred on rural development, micro credits, etc., that has a specific division for the Arab world, Enda Inter-Arabe, whose central office is in Tunis.

3.4. Analysis of Southern Europe

The countries considered are: Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Malta and Cyprus. (Note: Monaco is not a part of the EU but its contributions to the sustainable consumption of civil society is included with the French and therefore we will not make special mention of Monaco).

3.4.1. Regional context in relation to sustainable consumption and production.

In the regional context of the EU member states we note two analysis perspectives: one concerns the policies and initiatives of the international body that represents them; and the second, some of the macroeconomic and consumption behaviour characteristics of the area.

The policies of the European Union

The European Union still does not have a concrete policy for sustainable consumption but approaches the subject from two spheres: consumption and sustainable development. Both policies are complementary and have been the driving force for the development of many of the regional initiatives regarding sustainable consumption such as the initiatives of the environmental ministries of the member states like 'Green homes' by the Spanish Ministry of the Environment[10] or 'ecocitizenship' by the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development[11].

Sustainable consumption, at the moment, forms part of the sustainable development strategy approved in June 2001 by the Gotëburg European Council[12] although the publication of a specific EU strategy for sustainable consumption is expected shortly[13].

The main priorities are centred on:

- The importance of dissociating economic growth from the use of resources.
- Fair prices (internalizing costs).
- Maintaining comprehensive consultations with all interested parties.
- Executing an impact evaluation for the sustainability of all important policy proposals

The four top priority fields of action are: climate change, transport, public health and natural resources.

Additionally, the EU, through the European Commission, promotes projects always co-financed by member states and related countries. An interesting example of this partnership is the European Consumer Centre (ECC) which has offices in a number countries in the EU, such as Spain, France and Italy. This centre dedicates its main efforts to informing consumers of their rights in relation to consumption within the

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[10] www.mma.es
[11] www.environnement.gouv.fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=513
[12] http://europa.eu/pol/cons/index_es.htm
[13] Unofficial sources.

European sphere so that they can take better advantage of the possibilities offered by the domestic market.

The majority of the activities developed by the EU regarding consumption are centred on the topic of improving information for the consumer and public health. The EU has traditionally developed policies of consumer protection and initiatives for the improvement of consumer education in the field of public health.

It is interesting to note some of the initiatives regarding sustainable consumption that the EU is beginning to promote:

'2008 Europa Diary'. The 2008 Europa Diary is a tool for students to help promote responsible consumption patterns and information about consumption. It will be published in the form of a guidebook with more than 2.7 million copies to be printed, in every EU language. Schools can order them for free and the requests will be handled on a 'first come first served' basis. It was drawn up by the Commission in cooperation with the Generation Europe Foundation, national authorities and other interested parties. It makes reference to the European Union and also to questions related to consumers as well as social questions such as debts, nutrition, fraud, e-commerce, credit, sustainable consumption, climate change, the environment, and the dangers of surfing the Internet.

In April 2005 the Commission presented a new proposal for an Action programme about consumer health and protection 2005-2013, which will take the place of the existing programmes in the area of consumer policies and public health. The objective is to reinforce these two policies – both directed at consumers and that were separate – to benefit from a common synergy.

The EU develops other programmes of action that enunciate a certain number of basic rights and principles. The EU is also focused on the development of legislation regarding the safety of cosmetic products, labelling food products, false advertising or door-to-door sales, toy safety and general product safety, cross-border payments, abusive contract clauses, time share and distance selling, consumer access to justice, food legislation, sales and guarantees of consumer goods, and legislative initiatives related to actions of cessation, distance-negotiated contracts, comparative advertising and cross-border transfers[14].

One of the interesting initiatives related to responsible consumption is eco-labelling, or ecological labelling. The EU has a guidebook of ecologic products and services[15] that bear the flower symbol. Eco-labelling is a voluntary system providing incentives for businesses to produce products and services that respect the environment according to the parameters fixed by the EU. Work is currently being done toward a policy of harmonisation among the various European ecological labels, as there are already numerous labels that have been developed at various levels and for various reasons. The most well-known labels are: the EU ecolabel; the AENOR eco-label; the Asociación vida Sana labels (Natural Product; Recommended Product; Biological Product; Non-Manipulated Product); the EC Control System for Ecological Agriculture; Ecological Agriculture Labels from the Autonomous Communities of Spain; the Catalan Emblem of Guarantee of Environmental Quality; the German Blue Angel (Blauer Engel); Nordic Eco-labelling; the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and so forth.

Some macroeconomic characteristics of the countries studied related to sustainable consumption

In the contextual characterisation of EU countries we have to clarify two things:

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[14] http://ec.europa.eu/scadplus/leg/es/vb
[15] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

1. There are very few references in sustainable consumption studies of the social dimensions of sustainability (e.g. equity and distributive considerations). As such, the majority of the data and references that follow are referring to the environmental impact of consumption, what has been called ecologically sustainable consumption.

2. Italy, France, Spain and Greece are members of the EU and the OECD which we considered developed. Culturally, while there are noticeable differences in their civil society development, they show a similar general consumption pattern to OECD countries. As such, some of the data comes from OECD reports on sustainable consumption that we have considered more relevant for this study.

When it comes to counting the household consumption impact that each family unit has on environmental pressure, it is less, in comparison to environmental repercussions of the industrial and public sector activities (OECD 2002a). However, changing consumption patterns in homes is an important factor that has a bearing on the numerous environmental problems, including air and water pollution, waste generation, habitat alteration and climate change. On the other hand, in fields such as household energy use, travelling and the increase of goods and services consumed and discarded, its importance exceeds the efficiency increases achieved for the material and energy use.

According to forecasts, in the next 20 years the world GDP will increase by 75% (two thirds of the increase corresponds to OECD member states) and the world population will increase by one to two billion (mainly in non-OECD member states). From these increases it can be inferred that one of the main challenges for EU countries will be the separation of environmental pressure from economic growth, while not ceasing to satisfy human needs. (OECD 2002a).

According to the OECD report (OECD 2002a), the primary impact focus for European homes will be, in order of importance: 1. Waste generation and pollution related to personal travel; 2. Energy use and waste recycling; 3. Leaks into aquifers and water sources.

Furthermore, various studies have tried to quantify the per capita increase of private consumption and its relation to environmental degradation or the increase of carbon emissions[16]. The investigation into the impact of private consumption, from a life-cycle perspective, is still in its early stages. Countries like the United Kingdom, Denmark and Spain are beginning to accumulate statistics on which dimensions of private consumption have been developed most in recent years and which have the most environmental impact (either because of their emissions or measured in accordance with ecological footprints).

Some reports (OECD 2002a; Sustainable Consumption Roundtable 2006; The Carbon Trust 2006) highlight the following consumption areas that have or will have the greatest ecological impact:

1. **Recreation and entertainment:** underneath this heading the impact of transport is most noticeable, both among automobiles and air transport. It is estimated that by 2020 the number of vehicles in the OECD will grow by 32% and the number of kilometres travelled will increase by 40% (OECD 2002a).

2. **Food consumption and catering**: Despite the fact that the most significant environmental impact in this category happens in the first stages of the production chain (agriculture and food processing), family food preferences and

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[16] The CarbonTrust (2006). The Carbon Emissions Generated in All that We Consume. London, UK, The Carbon Trust.

habits directly affect the environment as they having a bearing on consumed energy and waste generation.

3. **Energy use or space heating:** Energy use in OECD member states increased 36% between 1973 and 1998 and an additional 35% increase is predicted by 2020 (OECD 2002a), in spite of improved energy efficiency. Energy use in businesses and residences is the fastest-growing area of energy use in the EU after transport.

4. **Health and hygiene products:** these types of products stand out because of their use of contaminating chemical materials.

5. **Waste development:** in accordance with OECD previsions, municipal waste will experience a 43% growth from 1995 to 2020 to reach 700 million tonnes annually in EU countries.

The consumer decision-making process is a complex phenomenon and has various influences such as: personal interest (price, quality, individual preferences, lifestyle, and values); social reasons (cultural environment, social context, and moral and collective values); economic context (per capita income, demographic factors (number of female workers working for others or the increase of single-family units)).

The OECD has estimated an increase in the growth of per capita consumption in the public and private sectors.

Per capita consumption in the private and public sectors (1980-2020)
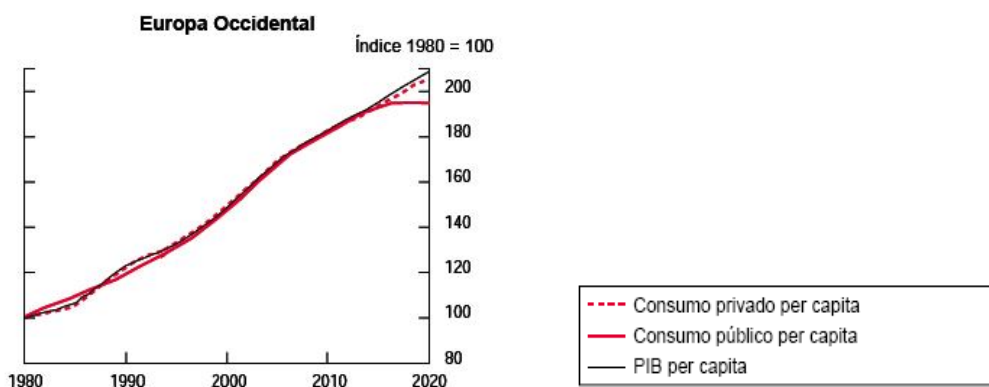
Source: OECD (2002a)

Keeping in mind these elements, the OECD considers the existence of the following trends regarding sustainable consumption:

- The increasing demand for energy and water due to the larger size of houses and the higher number of electrical appliances.

- The growing proportion of electricity in home energy consumption.

- Increasing waste creation and recycling.

3.4.2. Sustainable Consumption and Civil Society

3.4.2.1. Typology of the organisations and promoters

The organisations that work in matters related to responsible consumption in the European Union member states and Southern Europe are abundant. In spite of this,

most organisations are not characterized by having as their main goal the development of sustainable consumption, rather sustainable consumption forms a part of their values and activities.

In Europe we find environmentalist organisations, consumer organisations and other organisations more focused on social matters that are developing activities to promote sustainable consumption.

Perhaps one of the features that distinguish environmentalist organisations from social ones is the way they define sustainable consumption. Obviously, the environmentalists are more focused on the environmental impacts of sustainable consumption than on the social impacts. These organisations have often developed more accurate ways to measure sustainable consumption and have developed activities more focused on specific campaigns.

However, we find in Europe numerous examples of organisations that, in spite of their social or environmentalist origin, have introduced both aspects through their evolution and treat sustainable consumption in a comprehensive way. This is the case of organisations like Ecología y Desarrollo and Avina.

Consumer Organisations. Consumer organisations clearly represent the majority of organisations concerning consumption. The primary activities of these organisations consist of providing information to consumers and offering consultant services and legal representation. Some of these organisations have created discussion forums on their Internet sites to discuss topics related to weak sustainable consumption, highlighting subjects such as recycling, environmental care, or water use. These associations promote debate about what kinds of products consumers want to find on the market.

Consumer organisations are also focused on creating information campaigns and making access to legal resources easier for consumers. Another important task of consumer organisations is usually lobbying public organisations as they often have a large number of affiliates that increase their legitimacy and ability to pressure.

Among the consumer organisations analysed, noteworthy is Cittadinanza attiva in Italy. This consumer organisation deals with matters related to the ecological impact of consumption. One of their most interesting initiatives is called 'energy and protection'. This initiative is focused on informing consumers on different types of energy, how to develop water conservation practices and how to manage energy suppliers.

In France *Que Choisir* is noteworthy. This association is mainly focused on developing information tools for the consumer and representing the consumer to national and local public institutions.

CECU (the Confederation of Consumers and Users) in Spain also has interesting initiatives such as the information Campaign for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for consumers. This project's goal is to promote the incorporation of CSR practices in Spanish businesses, providing training to consumers in the essential aspects they need to know about for a correct understanding of the concept of CSR. It is important to highlight the Organisation of Consumers and Users (OCU) in the development of environmental criteria applied to consumption in their magazine *Compra Maestra*.
Another noteworthy organisation is the Centre for Consumer Research and Information (CRIC), which is engaged in reflection and proposals on responsible consumption. It publishes a quarterly magazine *Opcions,* shares information and opinions on sustainable consumption and useful tools to put it into practice.

A second classification type helps to understand the kind of relationship that the organisations have in their approach to the matters they deal with. This classification can be very interesting to reflect on the way that NGOs can and want to relate to companies and international organisations. The boundaries between types are difficult to draw and often the same NGO can be classified in various categories according to the particular actions it is proposing.

Taking into consideration these problems for classification we observe that NGOs can be classified as follows:

Sea Lions: The 'Sea Lions' NGOs are those organisations that cooperate with public bodies or companies to develop joint projects for sustainable consumption. They are characterized by being a debate forum and meeting point among various interest groups and for developing awareness campaigns for different interest groups.

For example, in Italy there are a number of associations that develop campaigns in favour of sustainable development. Many of these organisations are affiliates of international organisations and focus on increasing public awareness of global environmental problems. There are also many regional associations in Italy related to very specific environmental problems like river pollution and waste management.

In France 4D (Dossiers et débats sur le développement durable) stands out for having created a network to work with the OECD and the UN in order to coordinate the development of Agenda 21 and introduce the position of alter globalisation associations as well as to promote meetings. The objective is to coordinate meetings between institutions and NGOs and to create a sustainable network.

In Greece, the Federation of NGOs, MIO-ECSDE, works from this perspective both in the country where it is based and in the rest of Mediterranean countries. Although its approach is environmental, it brings together all kinds of initiatives from NGOs that belong to the federation.

Dolphins: These are organisations that are made up of other interest groups, especially companies and international organisations, but whose primary objective is to promote a clearly defined agenda following their basic foundation. These organisations cooperate in a very pragmatic way but without losing sight of their short- and medium-term objectives. We could say that they develop a parallel agenda but are still linked through cooperation. For these companies, cooperation is another way to reach their objective, not the objective itself.

In Spain organisations that promote responsible consumption stand out. Among these, Intermón Oxfam takes the idea of sustainable consumption as a complementary idea to their primary mission, which is to promote development in southern countries. One of their most interesting initiatives is 'Make Trade Fair'.

Ecología y Desarrollo (Ecology and Development) has made responsible consumption and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles one of their strategic lines of action. Through specific projects such as the website www.consumoresponsable.org., they want to be able to provide practical and comprehensive information (social and environmental aspects) to the consumer (person or institution) who wants to participate in a consumption that is more environmentally aware.
On the other hand, as an analyst for the main IBEX companies (the official index of the Spanish continuous market, calculated by the Sociedad de Bolsas and comprising the 35 most liquid stocks traded in the electronic Spanish Stock Market Interconnection System regarding CSR indicators, it has access to updated information that it uses to create reports and recommendations.

In Spain the firm FLO, which collaborates with public entities but whose goal is the development of direct information to the consumer, is also noteworthy.

Killer Whales or Activist Organisations: Activist organisations distinguished by their confrontational attitude towards the established consumption system. This confrontation can be intellectual, with new economic model proposals, or more practical through the organisation of boycotts and public awareness campaigns.

France stands out for being one of the countries where the alterglobalisation movements have developed a greater number of civil society associations designed to reflect on and act in favour of a change to current life models. These social movements are the ones developing actions related to strong sustainable consumption.

The associations whose objective is the development of strong sustainable consumption are often connected with various topics such as: advertising control, and water and natural resource management.

On the other hand, we find associations whose goal is to rethink other possible social models and alternatives to capitalism and other forms of consumption. These associations usually have an important political ideology upon which they base their proposals, as well as a number of active action proposals. These actions are usually protest campaigns, mobilisations and debate forums where policy proposals are discussed and the best practices on how to carry them out are shared. Some of the associations that we have highlighted in this report are the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizens' Action (ATTAC), the French association for cooperation in society, ACS, and the Greek University of Harokopio.

Greenpeace could also be classified in this category although more and more it is developing cooperation activities.

It is worth noting the importance that new technologies have for these associations, not just to circulate their proposals but also to create citizen discussion areas for sharing and creating political ideology. These forums are making proposals closer to and more well known by the people.

SETEM-Catalonia in Spain would also be classified within this category. SETEM coordinates the 'Clean Clothes campaign' (CRL) and works in the SETEM Federation framework. The CRL gathers information and presents it to Spanish consumers in various forms (educational programmes, marches, advertising, debates, books, demonstrations, Internet) so that they can know the truth about clothing production (low wages, long working hours, repression of the labour union rights, sexual discrimination, etc.). They want to use this information to encourage consumers to start a series of actions in order to improve labour conditions in the sector. The campaign also puts pressure on companies in order to hold them responsible and assure that products will be manufactured in decent labour conditions. They demand structural improvements and they pressure the companies in order to make them act on individual cases of labour rights violations.[17]

3.4.2.2. Initiative Categorisation

Despite the majority of organisations combining various types of initiatives and the fact that often the line between initiative types is very narrow, we are highlighting 3 initiative types:

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[17] www.ropalimpia.org

a) Promotion and dissemination of better consumption practices

These initiatives are characterized by being designed for interest groups to whom they want to reach constructively through education on consumption and information habits. The following initiatives stand out:

The '2008 Europa Diary', mentioned above, is an EU initiative promotes guidelines for and provides information about responsible consumption for European students.

In Spain, Intermón Oxfam its executing several of these initiatives: Global Express' '¿Consumista, yo?' comprises an informative dossier and activities for working on responsible consumption with secondary school students; A Guide to responsible consumption edited jointly with Hispacoop and the Observatorio de la Responsibilidad Corporativa (RSC), and the Actúa International Short Film Festival on responsible consumption.

b) Proposals for alternative models

These initiatives are characterized by making proposals for an alternative consumption from the current consumerism system. Noteworthy are:

The actions of ATTAC regarding the Tobin tax, a tax on currency transactions proposed by American economist James Tobin, to generate revenue which would provide an important source revenue with which to fight world poverty. Through lobbying and social pressure on the French Treasury and, particularly, on the ex-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, in 2000 ATTAC received the support of the French government for the Tobin tax in the G7. Its influence on the WTO has been remarkable in matters as important as the application of principle of prevention and the status of genetically modified foods.

ACS in France has created a discussion forum on eco-socialism and current initiatives for consumption reduction. It also has created an eco-social model that teaches people alternative ways of consumption.

c) Boycott initiatives or 'hard activism'

These initiatives are noteworthy for reporting and informing consumers against what NGOs consider bad practices by businesses or consumers. Some examples are:

RAP (Resistance to Aggressive Advertising), in France, has developed various awareness campaigns about consumption limiting and about the overexploitation of consumption promotion campaigns. Its most notable campaigns are:

- Shopping Free Day 'Journée sans achat'

- TV-Free Week 'Semaine sans télé'

- Christmas and Halloween Campaigns

- Action cinema, where they boycott those companies that advertise at the cinema.

3.4.2.3.   How to work/networks

New technologies have helped in network formation within each country and throughout various countries in the EU.

The networks follow similar classification patterns to those of the NGOs. For one there are large networks of consumer associations. Secondly, we find networks linked to the

development of common boycott or cooperation projects among various interest groups.

An interesting example is the French Independent Advertising Observatory (Observatoire indépendant de la publicité – OIP). Launched in June 2007, this observatory is made up of ecologists and people of prestige in the world of ecology. It is designed as a long-term initiative and is associated with the global initiative 'Alliance for the Planet,' which is pressing for the creation of an Independent Administrative Authority (IAA) that provides a legal framework to the marketing administration and content. The OIP has been supported by more than 30 member associations of the Alliance for the Planet, by the French Nature Federation and by professors like Jacques Testart, Armand Mattelart and Claude Got.

Another interesting example of working in networks can be found in 4D in France. 4D works in partnership with: alternative media (Altermonde, Alternatives économiques, La revue durable, etc.); training centres (Atelier architecture, Collège des Hautes études de l'environnement (CHEE), Centre d'Éco-Développement et d'Initiatives Sociales (CEDIS)); institutions (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Énergie (ADEME), OECD Watch, an international network of civil society organisations promoting corporate accountability, and others.)

We also find extensive international networks that are grouped around a similar thematic area. The Alliance for the Planet or the MIO-ECSDE Federation would be examples of this type.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The development of sustainable consumption, especially in its **strong format** (that which makes reference to a change of consumption habits and a reduction of consumption levels) are a cause for reflection on the complexity and diversity of the current social and economic model in the Mediterranean countries.

Within this complexity we find in the first place a **need to think about systems of global governance.** The globalisation of businesses and the increased power of some international organisations make these participants more and more important when it comes to defining policies to boost sustainable consumption for any kind of organisation.

International organisations. Despite some organisations such as UNEP and recently the European Commission making great advances in sustainable consumption through civil society, most still adopt a weak sustainable consumption approach. However, it is worth mentioning several UNEP projects such as the SCOPE programme in Europe, the Marrakech Process, the African Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production and its various initiatives in favour of sustainable public purchasing that are beginning to change the discourse of sustainable consumption from weak to strong. The EU in its Guide to the European Strategy for Sustainable Development (2008) also mentions actions that citizens should begin to take in order to reduce consumption levels. Nevertheless, despite the introduction of the concept, the actions and regulations developed are related to improving weak sustainable consumption.

Businesses for their part are gaining more and more influence on governments. The primary corporate activities regarding sustainable consumption are centred on providing information to the consumer, be it through media like magazines or by labels. Very few companies have considered a reduction in purchasing volume as a part of their strategy, although there are many companies which are committing to the durability and recycling capacity of their products.

Civil society has been working on sustainable consumption with great effect since the mid-'90s. The still small number of conferences and publications on strong sustainable consumption are noteworthy. The majority of these conferences and publications have been led by Universities, 'think tanks' and activist NGOs from northern European countries (Norway, Germany, Denmark) although it is also worth mentioning the role played by Italian, French and Spanish organisations.

The **main thematic areas** that stand out in these conferences and reports deal with the promotion of good practices in consumption habits, information on specific products, the carrying out of collective activities to reduce consumption and the development of tools to measure the impact of consumption and product lifecycle.

The concept of civil society organisations is very broad. Civil society by definition must be pluralistic and open, and grouping organisations like that together to generalize about their behaviour is complicated. However we find literature that talks about what the difficulties are in working through strategic collaborations with civil society organisations as well as the **difficulties that NGOs have in working in cooperation with each other**. The primary factors that explain the low degree of cooperation among NGOs are: competition for resources and users, dispersion of efforts, lack of resources to develop networks, personalities and an organisational culture adverse to change.

On the other hand, work **in cooperation or network formation** by civil society organisations, despite their difficulties, is proving to be one of the most successful ways to spread information. New technologies have helped this development greatly and there are other **factors** that are supporting this cooperation and increasing the **possibilities for success** for civil society organisations. These factors are: constant participation in complex problems, among which we could include sustainable consumption; the growing demand for transparency; the will of the beneficiaries for a greater concentration and specialisation in thematic areas; recognition by public administrations for the work of these organisations; and an increase in public and private funding.

Regional Analysis

Throughout the current study, we have tried to identify the most important questions related to the promotion of sustainable consumption in MAP member states through the prism of civil society organisations. To accomplish this, we have devised geographic and socioeconomic divisions that unite various countries in homogenous groups where sustainable consumption and its promotion are concerned. Inevitably, there are differences among the countries that make up each group that, in some cases, take on a particular importance in their repercussions with regards to our study. Israel, for example, forms a part of the Middle East but it barely relates to the surrounding countries in terms of networks or institutions. In the Maghreb states, Libya is presented as a country significantly apart from the social, environmental and economic policies that make up the region.

In order to study the Mediterranean, the MAP member states were grouped in to four spheres: the **Balkans** (Albania, Serbia Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia), the **Middle East** (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt), **Maghreb** (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) and **Southern Europe** (Spain, France, Italy, Monaco, Malta, Cyprus and Greece).

In the study of these 'regions', we have started from an analysis of the socioeconomic context in which they are and from where they come in order to understand and explain the reasons for the differences between the regions as far as civil society development and the promotion of sustainable consumption are concerned. As this last concept is a recent development in society and is linked to other matters like climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development, etc., it is no surprise that its adoption by civil society organisations is still relatively limited. This is especially evident in those societies that still have urgent and pressing needs to address. However, in almost all Mediterranean countries there are organisations and initiatives that, to a greater or lesser extent, try to promote sustainable consumption among their respective societies. In many cases, it is not an initiative aimed specifically at sustainable consumption, rather it includes other environmental, developmental or efficiency objectives. Next, we will proceed to summarize the different regional analysis, highlighting their current primary lines of action and their future projection.

The Balkans

The Balkan region, as we detailed previously, is the heir of tumultuous years of great instability initially caused by the fall of the Soviet bloc and soon after by the armed conflict that led to the dismantling of the ex-Yugoslavia. These two events have been the determining factors at both an economic and social level, leaving a setting of want and poverty from which they have only been recovering in the last few years. It is true that not all the regions of the country are in the same situation, but there are not many

differences regarding the proliferation of civil society organisations and their promotion of sustainable consumption. The lack of resources and institutional support and, in general, the needs and suffering that a good part of these countries suffered during 90s, did not help the emergence of social organisations. They have had to wait for the resolution of the conflicts so that the need for reconstruction and the reformation of societies and states, as well as the opening to their western neighbours, created a favourable environment for these organisations.

Perhaps this spirit of reconstruction, and certainly the ideas adopted from Western Europe, has been responsible for the ambitious challenges and objectives that many young organisations are taking on, in some cases along the same lines as the rest of the European countries. Nevertheless, the economic situation is far from favourable and there are still many structural problems to be resolved, which means that the initiatives which are enacted are marked by local problems and limited resources. Also, there are certain differences between the countries in regard to the progress that has been made in recent years, especially relating to institutional support.

There are a multitude of ways to work with this region of the Mediterranean, and good tools to do so. The REC (Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe) network is one of the most active networks as regards sustainable consumption and environment, with specific programmes for sustainable consumption, and it is in this region that it operates, coordinating and promoting national, regional and international initiatives. Areas of activity beginning to gain importance and whose future will depend largely on the trajectory that these countries follow is far as sustainability, are the areas of sustainable tourism or ecotourism, organic farming, energy efficiency or recycling and waste treatment, among others.

The degree of intervention or cooperation will depend in part on how much it wants to get involved in the field of sustainable consumption (promotion through divulgence and training, or by putting initiatives into practice at a popular or community level), and what type of alliances are found. In order to develop projects of great importance it would be helpful to count on the cooperation of, or at least the approval of, local governments and businesses, while for smaller initiatives perhaps it would be more appropriate to work with the main regional networks and their member organisations. In any case, it must not be forgotten that there are many cultural and social differences between the Balkan states, and that prudence, tact and local 'experience' are recommended when the time comes to set regional initiatives in motion.

The Maghreb and the Middle East

The Maghreb and the Middle East, were given individual analysis, given their geographical, political and in some aspects cultural differences. However, in this summary we will treat them jointly because, in general terms, there are more similarities than differences. There are two countries that stand out because they have not adapted to the patterns of their surroundings. **Israel**, a very economically developed country that could be compared to European countries, does not have the same reasons for exemption as its neighbours in regard to access to resources that satisfy essential needs, lack of training, etc. However, it is at the bottom of the pile in promoting sustainability criteria and environmental defence, so they have ahead of them a necessary task of raising awareness and pressuring the public administration. In **Libya,** however, the government system and its policies are what is stopping the natural development of civil society organisations, being isolated from movements that are emerging in its vicinity.

Civil society organisations and the promotion of sustainable consumption in the rest of the countries in these two regions are experiencing a positive and encouraging period inasmuch as they are starting to have a certain impact on society and their

governments. Obviously, there are important differences between all of them, but in general terms we see a definite **increasing trend to be more interested** in environmental problems, waste creation, energy saving and so on.

The last decades of industrial and demographic growth have created serious social problems headed by pollution, water shortages, unequal access to energy, erosion and uncontrolled urbanisation and in a number of cases, poverty. In general, the smallest and most modest civil organisations are the ones drawing attention to these facts, promoting alternatives and putting initiatives into practice, almost always at a community level. In other cases, especially in the Maghreb, it is the governments who are taking charge, supported by organisations in the most remote or disadvantaged areas. In general, it is a **very early stage**, with much left to do, especially in the field of education and awareness.

In any case, both the organisations and the governments of these regions are trying to undertake these new policies of sustainability and are happy to take part in any **international initiatives** that emerge. Work in these countries must include educational and awareness campaigns that meet the fundamental needs of the population as regards access to essential resources, information and well-being. It is, without doubt, a time of change, in which the **consumption models** that are adopted will define the social, environmental and economic future of both regions. Support from Europe and other developed countries as regards a transfer of funds, knowledge and technology is key to causing this trend change towards the sustainability of two regions that, while culturally and traditionally accustomed to sustainable and rational consumption, might be adopting unsustainable exogenous models like those used by 'rich' European countries.

In this respect, social organisations are perhaps in such an early stage of development that they are unable to confront the whole task by themselves. For this reason it is important not to forget the current political will of the government and other institutions, on the contrary it would be useful to reinforce it and cooperate with all the social partners. In doing so, we could consider two different lines of action, particularly as regards the pursued goal, **on one hand focused on the promotion of sustainable consumption through the support of civil and public initiatives** (they could range from workshops, seminars and courses for scholars to the promotion of cooperation of agencies and public institutions between countries and regions in knowledge and technology sharing); and on the other hand, the **reinforcement and mentoring** of civil society organisations as necessary partners and representatives of society (partnerships in joint initiatives, help in increasing the presence and circulation power of these organisations such as the website design, the creation regional and interregional networks).

Southern Europe

Undoubtedly, the most advanced region in terms of sustainable consumption and its application is what we have called 'Southern Europe'. On the one hand, the culture and tradition of civil society organisations are very advanced in these countries, and there are a large and diverse number of these organisations. On the other, society has the majority of its needs covered and is more interested and inclined towards other problems such as climate change, environmental destruction, global social and economic inequality, etc. Both aspects have helped the existence of a large number of organisations, experts and citizens ready to echo the sustainable consumption concept and to put studies, activities, dissemination campaigns, etc. into practice. In fact, the majority of the promoters of sustainable consumption come from these countries or other related countries with similar development levels. The thematic area of sustainable consumption has been greatly and quickly developed in this region to the

point of specializing in specific areas like **recycling, energy efficiency, compensation for greenhouse gas emissions, fair trade, ecological stamps and labelling**, etc. In some cases, even the promotion of sustainable consumption includes alternative movements that question the validity of our **consumption patterns,** our relationship with the rest of the world and our economic model.

In this region we can find many civil society organisations that promote sustainable consumption from different areas, which makes it easy to add them to existing initiatives or to generate new ones at a country or regional level depending on the impact that we are looking for and the approach that we want to take in the matter. For example, the large-scale dissemination and public repercussion that the **climate change** phenomenon is having in Europe could provide us with the opportunity to develop initiatives promoting sustainable consumption that are linked to or framed within this matter. Concepts such as **ecological footprints**, **greenhouse gas emissions** or **outsourcing,** among others, are easily given to a sustainable consumption approach and therefore promotional projects could be devised.

From a global perspective

The Mediterranean is possibly one of the richest regions on the planet in diversity of states, history, culture, religions, political models, languages, traditions, etc. The impact and influence this diversity has on different societies and the way in which they associate and demonstrate, reveals itself as an essential key when analysing the mechanisms of action of the various civil society organisations.

On the other hand, sustainable consumption is in many ways a recent concept, subject to many approaches and revisions, whose practical applications are tightly bound to the understanding of the concept that societies make of it, according to their needs, priorities and aspirations.

The promotion of sustainable consumption in the Mediterranean must therefore be understood and considered from these different settings. Keeping in mind the unique characteristics of each one of them will be a deciding factor in the achievement of the stated goals. In this respect the achievable goals in some regions will not be the same as in others, which is why it is helpful to define what our priority is, whether it is to promote sustainable consumption in a particular region or to develop this promotion from a particular approach of sustainable consumption. Having defined this first point, we can analyse what kinds of initiatives or in what regions to work, respectively.

Using this study as a starting point we have differentiated three large areas of action according to the development of civil society and the concept of sustainable consumption. Generalising, these areas correspond to **three stages of evolution**, with the Maghreb and the Middle East in the initial phase, the Balkans in an intermediate stage, and Southern Europe in an advanced phase. This type of classification is possibly overly general and does not take into account the specific circumstances of each country. However, when it comes time to consider the promotion of sustainable consumption, it is important to bear in mind these stages, inasmuch as they give us an initial framework from which we can define the objectives, the public to whom it is directed, allies, and so on.

Lastly, it is worth highlighting the interest and receptiveness found in all of the regions as regards sustainable consumption and its promotion. Although for different reasons, the desire almost all of the organisations have for joining in initiatives of this type is obvious, working for a change in the current, unsustainable consumption models.