



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
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HMGOG HOSTS SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

HM Government of Gibraltar is next week hosting an Expert Group Meeting on ***Higher Education for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean*** during the 28th and 29th July. The Ministry for the Environment has convened leaders of universities, representatives from government and intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organisations to develop an action plan for collaboration across the region.

Over 20 experts from across Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries including Italy, Gibraltar, Greece, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia will be present. Representatives from UN agencies including UNESCO, UNECE and UNEP, with responsibilities for higher education and sustainable development in the region, will also be attending.

The Meeting will be opened by Dr John Cortes, Minister for Health and the Environment, who will ask experts to recognise that the Mediterranean is a special place for those who live around its shores but also for those who visit and interact with this environment. Experts will be asked to consider the multiple policy and legislative frameworks that support the protection of its environment and biodiversity as well as enhancement of quality of life of people in the region.

The Expert Group has been convened with the understanding that higher education has a unique and significant contribution to make to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean, particularly in relation to addressing i) the pressures this environment from tourism, agriculture, trade and other economic activities and ii) the disparities in wealth, health and quality of life across the region.

The gathering is being organised with the support of Professor Daniella Tilbury and Professor Michael Scoullou who have been engaged with the development of the *Mediterranean Action Plan in Education for Sustainable Development* as well as a review of Higher Education practice across the region. The meeting will identify key priority actions and partnership platforms to progress these within realistic timeframes.

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes, commented, "We are delighted to welcome such a high level meeting of experts from around the Mediterranean and from United Nations Agencies to Gibraltar. Gibraltar has an important role to play within the Mediterranean, and is committed to both environmental sustainability and developing higher education, so that this meeting is particularly relevant to the Government's programme."