

Your Excellency Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy of Portugal, Jorge Moreira da Silva

Your Excellency Ambassador of Norway, Ove Thorsheim

Audun Garberg, Political Adviser to the Norwegian Minister for the Environment of Norway

Rune Vistad, Head of Sector at FMO

Distinguished participants

It is with great pleasure that I warmly welcome you to this Conference.

I wish to thank EEA Grants for this wonderful opportunity to host this event with such a convenient timing. In fact, there are two circumstances that concur to this.

First, the recent IPCC report, just released, which shows strong evidence of current and future climate change and that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Second, our own internal work in Portugal. Just last week we have concluded an important milestone in our adaptation policy. The first Progress Report of Portugal's National Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change represents a significant effort of interministerial coordination on the path to identify the main vulnerabilities and concrete actions to build better responses and increase the country's resilience to climate change. The next stage of the National Strategy will focus on the implementation of concrete action and both our partnership with EEA Grants and the forthcoming European Structural Funds for 2014-2020 will play a crucial role in this regard.

EEA Grants were considered in Portugal a great opportunity to fill in gaps identified in our National Adaptation Strategy and we welcomed it strongly.

Water Management and Coastal Protection are central issues when we think of climate change impacts. Through its responsibilities both in terms of Adaptation to Climate Change and in Water Management and Coastal Protection the Portuguese Environment Agency is in a unique position to develop integrated approaches of action in these fields. Examples of this ongoing work can be found for example in the National Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change, the National Plan for Efficient Water Use, the National Action Plan for Coastal Protection, the Water Basin Management Plans, among others, several of them with implementing projects on the ground.

As it is also assumed in the recent EU Adaptation Strategy, there are several dimensions of adaptation to climate change that must be considered:

Its cross-cutting nature spreading across most of the economic and social areas, as well as biophysical systems, which requires mainstreaming of adaptation in sectoral policies;

The need for cost-benefit evaluation to determine priorities – in particular focusing on win-win solutions and low or no-regrets options;

Cooperation and knowledge transfer;

Monitoring of efforts including adequate indicators and measurement metrics;

The role of regional/local action and in particular of cities.

Allow me to highlight in particular that action at the local level constitutes one of the main focus of our Adaptation Programme under EEA Grants.

Let me now address this in particular. Programme AdaPT fits the overall objectives of EEA Grants:

- Reducing economic and social disparities – and we strongly believe that climate change affects differently regions and actors, and frequently the most vulnerable are the less prepared to respond adequately.
- Strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States – and Programme AdaPT is doing just that as the



partnership between the Portuguese Environment Agency and DSB, the Civil Protection Authority from Norway demonstrates.

Programme AdaPT will allow us to raise awareness and build internal capacity at municipal level in integrating climate change adaptation concerns in local management instruments.

Through a schools programme, to provide training to both teachers and students in adaptation to climate change and promote a competition among schools for the best adaptation demonstration project.

Programme AdaPT will also provide support to the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere in establishing an online climate change science information portal.

Finally, Programme AdaPT will also support a call for adaptation pilot projects.

The Portuguese Environment Agency is fully committed with the implementation of Programme AdaPT, which will start soon after the signature of the Programme Agreement and Programme Implementation Agreement, which will take place at the end of this opening session.

My final word to wish you all a successful conference and productive discussions.

Thank you