



GENERAL MEETING OF THE CPMR INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION

Political seminar

“The added value of European cohesion policy and cooperation in the Mediterranean”

This event is financially supported by the European Union as part of the European project:
“Spotlight on Cohesion policy: Europe’s regions at the forefront”

Conclusions

Apostolos Katsifaras, President of the Intermediterranean Commission and the Dytiki Ellada Region, and **Venetsana Kyriazopoulou**, Rector - University of Patras, welcomed all the participants and introduced the seminar.

After greeting the participants and congratulating Apostolos Katsifaras for his re-election, **Rui Bettencourt**, Deputy Regional Secretary to the Presidency of the Government of the Azores for External Relations - CPMR Presidency, spoke about the future of the EU and the CPMR. Despite the difficulties, he recalled the importance of a fraternal, humanistic and progressive Europe. He stressed the importance of maintaining effective European action to provide citizens with responses to current challenges. He sought transparency and construction with citizens via the regions, whose role is essential. Hence the work of the CPMR where the voice of the Regions is heard, in their differences, with symbiosis and for synergies that make action so effective.

Apostolos Katsifaras recalled his commitment to work for a cohesive and sustainable society in the Mediterranean area. He summarised the main lines of action of the Intermediterranean Commission on maritime issues, migration, accessibility, economic and social cohesion and explained that he will work through our collaboration to reduce the inequalities that can exist across the territories and to strive for the prosperity of the Mediterranean.

Nasos Anagnostopoulos, from the Attiki Region, spoke to explain that his Region wants to join the signatories of the [Bologna Charter](#) on the sustainable development of the Mediterranean coast. He recalled the importance of our actions in the fight against global warming for the preservation of our environment and the quality of life of our citizens. Hence the involvement of the Attiki Region in the work of the Bologna Charter.

Session I: The action of the European cohesion policy for youth employment, social inclusion, entrepreneurship, citizenship and intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean, in a context of sustainable development

Apostolos Katsifaras introduced the session focusing on the added value of the European cohesion policy in the Dytiki Ellada Region and in the Mediterranean

Guy Esclopé, Regional Councillor of the Occitanie Region, recalled the importance of Europe and the cohesion policy in the development of territories. He expressed a wish for some concrete reminders of the successes achieved with European funds because Europe is not a problem but rather a solution. He emphasised the role

of the Regions in the notions of solidarity and sharing. In this sense, the Occitanie Region is fully committed to these issues of cohesion for balanced development across all territories. He recalled that the European cohesion policy represents 3 billion of investment in Occitania between 2014 and 2020, funds managed directly by the Region for the development of the Region via numerous European projects. The balance sheet for the European funds allows us to showcase Europe as a tool of solidarity and proximity for the benefit of the territories. The action taken by Europe and relayed by the Regions undoubtedly produces positive results for the mobilisation of actors facing the major challenges of the 21st century, representing ecological transition, the digital economy or innovation.

Manuel Pleguezuelo, Director-General for EU, External Action and Cooperation - Region of Murcia, gave a [presentation](#) of a project to combat violence against women. He presented the project's objectives, partners and methodology. He recalled the main idea of the project which is to integrate female victims of violence into society, and in particular into the world of work. He highlighted the "training" component to help these people free themselves and concluded with the project's transferability aspect.

José Manuel Chirivella, Deputy Director - Valencia Youth Institute, gave a [presentation of the JOOP project](#) developed within the framework of the operational program 2014-2020 for the employment of young people and aimed at the 16-21 year olds who have left the education system. He detailed the program's objectives: to help reorient young people, restore their confidence, help them develop their skills and habits and, above all, reintegrate them into the education system. He detailed a range of actions implemented in this regard: visits of companies, monitoring of young people... and presented the positive and encouraging results of the process.

Christina Mpikou, President of SOPSY (Club of Mental Health), makes a speech to present her experience of the issue of the session.

Estela López-Hermoso, CPMR Policy Analyst for Cohesion Policy gave a [presentation](#) of the European Commission's budget and the legislative proposal for the cohesion policy and CPMR analysis. She highlighted the various positive aspects, including the inclusion of all the European Regions, the partnership principle, the simplification efforts, and the new component for interregional innovation and the stronger emphasis on regional smart specialisation strategies. Some negative points to be noted, however, are the shortcomings in terms of the definition and role of the cohesion policy, thematic concentration at national rather than regional level, the incompatibility with the territorial dimension specified in the European Treaties, the proposals for revising cross-border maritime cooperation programs and the potential abolition of Interreg Europe. Overall, she concluded that a reduction of the budget devoted to the cohesion policy would have a very negative impact on programs (especially Interreg), while at the same time imposing lower co-financing rates.

Session II: What is the future for territorial cooperation in cohesion and neighbourhood policies and what links are there with emerging strategies and initiatives in the Mediterranean? A political vision

Davide Strangis introduced the session and reviewed the progress made and prospects for the post-2020 period. He talked about the work and studies undertaken in relation to this theme, and the importance of these policies for the daily life of the inhabitants of our territories. He recalled that we must now face a number of concerns, but our goal must remain the cohesion of our territories.

Estela López-Hermoso, Political Analyst of the CPMR, spoke about the cohesion policy and the legislative proposal of the European Commission for European Territorial Cooperation and the CPMR analysis of the future of Interreg. She gave a [presentation](#) of the work of the CPMR and the Geographical Commissions on this theme, and summarised the main elements of the post-2020 policy. She went back over the EU budget and its implications for cohesion policy. She concluded with the added value of the Interreg programs and summarised the CPMR's main messages, specifying the upcoming meetings between the CPMR and European leaders.

Peter Bossman, member of ARLEM and mayor of Piran (Slovenia), spoke about the work and vision of ARLEM for the future of territorial cooperation in the cohesion and neighbourhood policies in the Mediterranean. He stressed the importance of cooperation between regional and local authorities, and regretted that in many countries decisions remained highly centralised. He expressed a desire for more proximity to the needs of citizens, and he recalled that the cohesion policy is aiming for this, in its design

and its instruments. The partners to implement it are in the Regions and he applauded the CPMR's work in this area.

Raffaele Mancini, Expert in Blue Economy - Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, spoke about the latest information on the West MED initiative. He recalled the last stages of this initiative and the synergies that are in progress.

Agnes Rampal, Regional Councillor of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Commission, presented the position of her Region on European Territorial Cooperation. She raised a warning about the budget choices to be made for the post-2020 period. Selections must be closed before the election of the new European Parliament in spring 2019. So the future of programs for the Mediterranean is to be decided now. Lower budgets have been announced, while the challenges remain enormous for our regions. She wants us to be extremely vigilant about the new calculation methods for the budgets. Regarding the disappearance of cross-border maritime programs, she recalled that the sea has no borders and that maritime issues are shared ones! She therefore insisted upon the imperative links between north and south for the neighbourhood programs, which are unfortunately under threat. She expressed hopes that these programs continue and be simplified to make them more operational. Finally, she concluded that Europe cannot afford to turn its back on the Mediterranean.

George Alexakis, Vice-President of the CPMR for Maritime Affairs and Vice-Governor of the Kriti Region for European and International Affairs, wanted to give concrete examples of the results of European territorial cooperation. The Kriti Region has developed numerous cooperation projects on research, competitiveness of SMEs, waste management, social integration ... Solidarity and exchanges of experiences are, according to him, values that must be further developed because all these projects have resulted in many advances for our territories. He also stressed the importance of maintaining the programs, and regretted the recentralisation of European territorial cooperation policies. Finally, he highlighted the launch of a strategy in the Mediterranean based on the action of the Regions, a strategy in which the CPMR naturally has a major role to play. Finally, he concluded by stressing the importance of a common macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean.

Aouatif Derrous, Regional Councillor of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, Vice-President of the Commission for Cultural Affairs, Education and Scientific Research, presented the major needs identified by her Region. They focus on three areas: a dialogue in the Mediterranean to improve the knowledge of territories, for example via the observatory of strategies that has been established; protection of the specific cultural and environmental characteristics of the basin and the strengthening of territorial development for improved social cohesion. She expressed hopes that the Interreg programs can also benefit the Regions of the southern shore.

Theodoros Galiatsatos, Governor of the Ionia Nissia Region, recalled that the cohesion policy is very important for the European territories. He refused any nationalisation of this policy and stressed that it must be part of a long-term EU strategy for the development of all territories. Alliance and cooperation are two key words for our citizens. He emphasised his interest in territorial unification, and recalled the transversal character of his Region. He stressed the importance of continuing the maritime cooperation because the sea is the link in the Mediterranean. Finally, he talked about the migration challenge and the work that the Intermediterranean Commission is able to do on this subject. The capitalisation of the added value of the cooperation must be highlighted.

Núria Bedos, for the Generalitat de Catalunya, recalled the work of the "Territorial Co-operation and Macro-Regional Strategies" working group and the position of Catalonia. She hoped that programs and multilateral cooperation would be maintained for the next programming period. We must continue to work for the implementation of a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean, with reference to the ARLEM report on the subject. Finally, she recalled that the WestMED initiative is a positive experiment which is all part of better governance in the Mediterranean.

Ángel Luis Sánchez Muñoz, for Andalusia, spoke to recall the importance of cooperation for his Region, especially with the northern part of Africa. He expressed regret that this approach has not been taken into account in the announced cooperation programs. Cross-border cooperation, in particular maritime, is certainly more complicated. The Spanish Regions are highly decentralised, but they want their situation to be considered, especially on the migratory issue which concerns them in particular.

Angélique Quilichini, for Corsica, stressed the importance of cross-border maritime cooperation, particularly for an island region such as Corsica. Co-operation between Mediterranean Regions makes sense in view

of the common identity of all the Regions of this area, whether from the southern or northern shore. For Corsica, European territorial cooperation is essential to ensure the cohesion and well-being of the population. She concluded on the specific characteristic of islands in the face of climate change and the importance of cooperation for its development.

Daria Terradez, for the Generalitat Valenciana, returned to the issue of migration. She sought to go beyond security/crime issues, to ensure that fundamental rights are respected, and that conditions are met for migrants, despite the difficult conditions.

Ettayeb El Masbahi, for the Oriental Region, clarified that his Region is leading an educational project for a higher education institute specialising in maritime trades which could be open to students from the southern and northern banks. On European territorial cooperation, he wished to emphasise the human aspect of this policy, which is aimed at improving the lives of citizens.

Mohamed Sadiki, for Rabat-Sale-Kenitra, questioned the non-inclusion of Moroccan Regions in the CPMR maps presented by Estela López Hermoso in her presentation.

Davide Strangis gave a summary of the session and thanked the Regions for their contributions. He then presented the major political documents that were approved by the General Meeting of the Intermediterranean Commission:

- ❖ [Final declaration](#) of the General Meeting of the Intermediterranean Commission
- ❖ [Position on the future of territorial cooperation in the Mediterranean](#)
- ❖ Communication on [Promoting sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean Regions](#)

Session III: Improving multilevel governance, synergies between territorial cooperation programs and the capitalization of project results in the Mediterranean basin - Focus on maritime

George Alexakis, Vice-President of the CPMR for Maritime Affairs and Vice-Governor of the Kriti Region for European and International Affairs, introduced the session and emphasised his desire for synergies on maritime activities in the Mediterranean. He made a specific point about maritime issues for better cooperation and multilevel dialogue, optimal capitalisation of project results and better governance/synergies in basin-wide cooperation programs. He raised the issue of lobbying the European institutions.

Raffaele Mancini, Expert on the blue economy - Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, on the UfM's prospects for work on the blue economy, the environment and climate, gave a [presentation](#) of the UfM's blue economy agenda. He recalled the context of the UfM's work, particularly on the issue of sustainability, and explained the VTC (*Virtual Knowledge Centre*). He recalled the extension of the BlueMed initiative to non-EU countries, and gave a detailed presentation of the UfM's climate agenda. Finally, he invited the Regions to take part in the various events organised within the framework of the UfM and to take part in the dialogue initiated.

Nikos Papandroulakis, Director for Research - Institute of Biology, Biotechnology and Marine Aquaculture - HCMR (*Hellenic Centre for Marine Research*), and head of the group for strengthening SRIA (*Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda*) of BLUEMED, gave a [presentation](#) on the progress of the BlueMED initiative. He presented the strategic agenda on innovation and research, a living document that aims to encourage blue growth in the Mediterranean and explained how this document will evolve.

Julien Le Tellier, Program Officer on Economic and Social Affairs - UN Environment/MAP Coordinating Unit, Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention, gave a [presentation](#) on the role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). He recalled the operation of the Barcelona Convention Plan which is a multilateral regional agreement on the three-dimensional environment: the institutional parts, the MAP Coordinating Unit based in Athens and the operational dimension. He explained the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development, a forum for government representatives and various stakeholders to address shared issues and the achievement of objectives/actions that could be shared with regional authorities.

Enrico Mayrhofer, Director of the Brussels Office of the Tuscany Region - Managing Authority of the MARITTIMO Italy-France Program, gave a [presentation](#) of the project with a few figures. He recalled the links of this project with European and global strategies, particularly on the issue of climate change and the objectives of sustainable development.

Stavroula Pelekasi, Coordinator for Greece - PANORAMED Project, gave a [presentation](#) of the project and its partners. She detailed the added value of the project for the Regions, in terms of dialogue, relations with southern countries and strengthening mechanisms.

Michele Colavito, Agency for Cohesion (Italy), Chair of the Monitoring Committee - Interreg MED Program, gave a [presentation](#) on the improvement of multi-level governance, the synergies between the different cooperation programs and capitalisation in the basin. He summarised some of the key figures relating to cooperation in the Mediterranean and presented the new program architecture. He concluded on the importance of Interreg projects for a real contribution to governance, and to emerging strategies and initiatives.

Lodovico Gherardi, Managing Authority of the Interreg ADRION Program - Region Emilia-Romagna, made reference to the signing of the European Agreement on High Performance Computing <http://www.consilium.europa.eu> by some EU Member States, making Big Data a priority for them and for the European Commission. This theme has been the subject of major financial investments, including the acquisition of at least four machines that can manage this type of data at European level and the identification of centres that can host them. The domains covered by these computers would be meteorology, climate change, health, social issues management in urban areas, and anything that could be improved with the use of these technologies. The Emilia-Romagna Region therefore called for at least one of these machines to be hosted in the Mediterranean, and that the application of a Mediterranean region should be supported for this purpose to make this data and these infrastructures available, beyond Europe, for the Mediterranean basin.

Daríá Terrádez Salom, Director-General for relations with the EU and the State - Generalitat Valenciana - Host authority for the Western Mediterranean satellite of the ENI CBC MED program, recalled the large number of projects selected within the scope of this program. She insisted on its ability to solve political problems and respond to urgent questions in the context of cooperation in the Mediterranean. She gave some examples of very concrete projects set up on the Mediterranean coast and explained that all tools and applications have been provided to the local authorities, which will allow them to continue the actions. She concluded on the synergies created with other programs and on the vital importance of the ENI program for the Mediterranean as it brings together all the values of solidarity, creativity and pride in our territories.

Mercedes Acitors, INTERACT Program Officer recalled the role of this territorial cooperation program, which aims to help other programs to increase and pool their capacities. She explained that the information phase must now be concluded and that action must be taken. She gave her point of view on the most recent announcements made by the European Commission for the coming programming period. For now, INTERACT seems to be well positioned, with a good budget and a lot of work on the horizon. This will increase synergies with all programs. On the other hand, the co-financing rate of the projects will probably decrease by around 10%, which may hinder the participation of certain actors. This is probably where the biggest problem for the Mediterranean lies. Moreover, many questions remain about the architecture of the program, between cross-border maritime, transnational, trans-regional cooperation ... Regulations will be approved by May 2019 but a way to proceed has not yet been defined, and discussions are still in progress with the States. But there are positives: the definition of common rules for all funds will certainly facilitate synergies between programs, and partners will need to clarify whether cooperation will be possible or not.

Guillaume Huet, Director of Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation- Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, summarised the discussions. In his opinion, the most important thing will be to avoid conflicts of use in the Mediterranean space. An organisation based on an integrated approach will need to be established, while seeking operational content to implement on a given territory. Regarding European territorial cooperation, he insisted on the Regions' responsibility to innovate for the next programming period. The projects will really need to be considered over the long term, keeping in mind the concept of transferability and organised so that the results obtained are genuinely used to avoid operations/studies being duplicated. The strategic aspect must also be considered. We are sufficiently equipped to make proposals. Finally, he concluded on the role of regional authorities, Member States, European institutions to ensure multi-level coordination.

Apostolos Katsifaras closed the seminar and thanked all the participants for their contributions and participation.