



Political Bureau of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission

DECLARATION OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU

- PATRAS 2014 -

“Towards a road map for Macro-regional strategies in the Mediterranean”

13th of March 2014 – Patra (Western Greece)

As was already stated by the General Assembly (GA) of the Intermediterranean Commission (IMC) in 2013, the current global, **European and Mediterranean socio-economic and geo-political situation** demonstrates the needs to work hard on the reduction of the gaps between the shores of the Mediterranean, as between the Euro-Mediterranean area and the rest of Europe, and between the basin as a whole and the global system. Populations, mostly the youth, the elderly and the lowest income groups, as the middle classes, have been very affected in these last years of crisis. Meanwhile, one of the most important challenges of the southern area of the Mediterranean concerns also the democratic continuity and the future developments of decentralisation¹.

Alongside this, **the European Union** has recently approved its new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and is entering in the central phase for the renewal of its main institutions with elections to the European Parliament in May 2014 and the future appointment of a new European Commission and its President, elected for the first time by the EU Parliament.

In this context, taking into account the main challenges of the area², the specific needs of its members, and with a view to answer the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy and (to) strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, **the Political Bureau (PB) of the Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR:**

- Gives its support to the recommendations shaped, with the valuable collaboration of its members, in the **ARLEM Ecoter Report on a “Cohesion Strategy for the Mediterranean”** that deepen the reflection on how to apply and adapt the EU Cohesion Policy approach and methodology to the EU Neighbourhood Policy for the South as on why and how to set up and implement macro-regional strategies in the Mediterranean basin.
- Underlines the importance that the EU must continue being the main strategic partner for the countries of the Southern and the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean as stated by the ARLEM in the 2013 report on the **Territorial dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean**, and manifests its will to contribute - from its regional perspective - to the efforts of the Assembly towards the **capacity building of the local and regional authorities in the management of public policies** and in particular, through its support to the first project - whose definition is ongoing in this frame - that will deal with integrated and sustainable urban development. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, taking into account the specific issues concerning certain of its regions³, also shows its interest concerning the new topic appointed by the ARLEM for the 2013 report of the Ecoter commission: **the role of the local and regional authorities in the management of migration flows**. In this sense, the CPMR

¹ e.g. in Tunisia, where a new Constitution was recently approved, or in Morocco where a regionalisation process is already ongoing.

² At different levels: political (e.g. democratic transitions, decentralisation), socio-economic and environmental (e.g. intelligent, inclusive, sustainable growth), cultural (e.g. intercultural dialogue).

³ e.g. Sicily, Puglia, Crete, or the regions from Tunisia and Morocco, among many others.

Intermediterranean Commission will surely give its point of view to the reflections that will be pointed out in a perspective that will be based on multilevel coordination, observation, prevention, protection, solidarity and development.

- Welcomes the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the **added value of Macro-Regional strategies**⁴ that underlines in particular the key aspect of the external projection of Macro-Regional strategies, and its implications in the frame of the Enlargement and Neighbourhood policies. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Political Bureau also welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to draft a new document in 2014 on the **governance of the Macro-Regional Strategies** which aspects of leadership, ownership and daily implementation seems to be fundamental in order to foster the efficiency of the strategies. To this extent, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Political Bureau asks the Commission to reflect in particular on the multilevel governance aspects, the coordination with stakeholders from Neighborhood countries as on the specific functioning of the Fora already in place, and on the possible preparatory actions for the emerging strategies.

- Concerning the forthcoming **European strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - EUSAIR**:
 - o The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission reiterates the importance of ensuring its completion and launch before the end of 2014, with the presentation of the EC Communication and the Action Plan within the Greek Presidency of the EU in June 2014, and the endorsement of the EU Council during the Italian semester. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission takes notes of the great stakeholders mobilization that led the EU Commission to better shape its initial vision⁵ of the main pillar of the strategy: "Blue Growth", "Connecting the region", "Environmental quality", "Sustainable tourism", complemented by two cross-cutting dimensions: "Capacity building (including communication)" and "Research, Innovation and SMEs development". The participation of regional and local governments - the bottom up - and the Multilevel governance approaches are - and will be - paramount in order to ensure the success of the strategy, together with the involvement of the civil society and the private sector. In this sense, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission offers its support and expertise for improving the future actions of coordination among key stakeholders. It supports in particular the launch of an Adriatic-Ionian Forum as a capacity building initiative – similar to the successful Atlantic Forum – to allow sub-state stakeholders to play an active role in the realisation of the EUSAIR.

 - o In line with its general objectives concerning growth and the rapprochement of the Balkans with the EU, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission underlines the importance of the future inclusion – after the consolidation of the strategy - of the rest of Balkans countries that could be interested in joining it. Indeed, the relevance of taking into account the global Mediterranean dimension of the EUSAIR should be considered a pilot for the rest of the basin and should start evaluating, from the very beginning the interactions with the other existing and emerging strategies (Danube, Alpine, but of course the new possible strategies for the rest of the Mediterranean). Moreover, the countries involved on different Macro-Regional strategies at the same time should foresee adequate human and administrative resources in order to accomplish the objectives that will be defined.

 - o Referring to the instruments for fostering the implementation of the EUSAIR, it will be important to take advantage of the current phase of the programming period (drafting of the National and Regional Operational Programmes, ETC Operational Programmes, etc.) in order to align strategies with funding instruments. In particular, the new transnational Adriatic-Ionian programme shall meet the deadlines in order to be ready for giving the necessary support to the strategy, together (and possibly in synergy) with other programmes such as the Med transnational programme or the IPA Adriatic and the CBC programmes in the area.

 - o Takes note of the working document that is being defined within the COTER Commission⁶ of the Committee of the Regions on the Eusair, and offers its support to its member regions in order to give a consistent contribution to the reflections.

- Renews its support to the **“Charter for the Democratic Governance in the Mediterranean”**, approved last October 2013 by the Political Council of the Mediterranean Commission of CGLU to which the Intermediterranean Commission has recently renewed its membership.

4 COTER-V-042; COM(2013) 468 final

5 Discussion-paper on a EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

6 COTER-V-047

- Will follow with attention the developments related to the **Communication of the European Commission on “A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism”**. In particular, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission stresses its will to collaborate with the Islands Commission of the CPMR in the frame of the proposed study on “how to improve island connectivity and design innovative tourism strategies for remote islands”, and on the proposal to develop a cultural heritage based tourism (e.g. Unesco sites located in the Intermediterranean Commission Regions), underwater archaeological parks, and eco, nature and health tourism in coastal destinations (e.g. fishing-tourism), while using multi-stakeholder strategies to ensure the coherence of tourism offers and better accessibility of insular locations. Additionally, the Intermediterranean Commission commits to setting up a task force within its Working group on “Sustainable Tourism and Culture” in order to draw up future strategic and pilot ETC projects in the field of Coastal and Maritime Tourism within the new financial framework, paying special attention to the involvement of public-private stakeholders (including tour operators).
- Agrees that the use of the seas must respect ecological boundaries to protect and value its potential for present and future generations⁷. Intermediterranean Commission Regions will pay a special attention to this ecosystem approach during the drawing phase of their own regional development strategies concerning the Mediterranean Sea. In this perspective, Intermediterranean Commission Regions will monitor closely the ongoing implementation **of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**. In this context, as pointed out by the last DG ENVI report “Marine messages: our seas, our future - moving towards a new understanding”, which has been presented during the HOPE conference in Brussels last 3-4 March 2014, the Intermediterranean Commission Regions are very concerned about the lack of the data related to the assessment of the “good environmental status” of the marine regions identified by the MSFD. At the same time, the Intermediterranean Commission Regions underline that the political debate about the assessment of the “good environmental status” of these marine regions should not refrain from taking into account the socio-economic impacts that, in a short term, the implementation of the future national “marine strategies” could lead to. Additionally, the Intermediterranean Commission remind that Regions represent the main political stakeholders in charge of drawing up, financing and implementing policies at territorial level as well as strategic donors enhancing the creation of cross borders networks of regional maritime observatories. Consequently, the Intermediterranean Commission call for Mediterranean Member States to recognise the key role of Regions by involving them, in a concrete way, in the implementation of the MSFD.
- In this spirit, stresses the importance of ensuring a balance between economic, environmental and social dimension in organising the development and coexistence of human activities in maritime and coastal areas. The draft directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal zone Management (ICZM) which is under negotiation could bring a contribution to this. At this stage of the negotiations, regions are asking to EU institutions to guarantee a connection between MSP and ICZM within the new directive (article 4), to ensure the right consideration of the Regions while the directive will be implemented (art. 9) and to clarify the aspects dealing with the ecosystem approach (art. 4).
- Stresses in parallel the necessity to unleash the blue growth potential of the Mediterranean countries. The Mediterranean Sea has very strong assets in both existing and emerging maritime economic sectors, such as in the areas of shipyards, marine renewable energies, fisheries and aquaculture, or biotechnologies.
- Asks the European Council to recall – on the occasion of its meeting in March or later – the opportunities offered by blue growth to boost EU industry and assist the energy transition in Europe, urges the European Commission and Member States to take into account this potential for blue growth in all their policies, and underlines in particular the initiatives taken by the Commission to improve the competitiveness of maritime industries and develop blue energy, which should in turn lead to action plans
- Warns that the selected point of the international waters in the middle of the Mediterranean, where the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons is set to take place implies risks for the Mediterranean, the biggest enclosed sea in the world, encompassing 427 million inhabitants living around it. If the foreseen process of hydrolysis that will be realized for the first time in the middle of the sea fails⁸, the consequences for the environment, ecosystem, fisheries, marine and coastal zones could be significant. Therefore – and although the IMC feels the opportunity of destroying Syrian chemical

⁷ In particular: “policy ambitions for economic growth of maritime activities must be aligned with policy targets for securing healthy, clean and productive seas; healthy oceans and productive ecosystems will also require fundamental shifts in the systems that fulfill our societal needs and in the way we use ecosystem services; true cooperation among all stakeholders and wider societal engagement will be crucial to support this transition”.

⁸ Due to external (e.g. storms), procedural, unexpected factors or even for human mistake.

weapons as a great step towards the Peace in the area – it considers that all the local communities concerned deserves to be fully informed with documentary evidence and transparent procedures on this issue, so as to be able to evaluate the correctness of the options as the security of the procedures followed and even the possible alternative solutions. Considering the urgency of the matter, and even though it is understood that all the necessary precautions are been taken, the European, National and International Institutions and Organisations should continue to provide updated information on a frequent basis.

- Shows its great interest in being involved - together with the other CPMR Geographical Commissions – in the **governance of the six TEN-T multimodal corridors concerning the Mediterranean⁹ and the future Motorways of the Sea**. IMC Regions offer in particular their support to the EU Commission (DG Move) and the new coordinators of the corridors in order to give useful advises concerning the elaboration of the future deployment plans of the corridors and the coordination of the specific infrastructure projects that will be developed. Of course, IMC Regions wish to be also consulted by the consortia that have been already constituted for starting the study of TEN-T core network corridors and to be involved in the specific *Fora* (with the regions and the Civil Society) that will be organised by Member States in September 2014, as to make concrete proposals based on their sound experiences about the priority projects, the bottlenecks to improve, the possible complementary MOS, and to reflect on the neighborhood dimension of the TEN-T network and work in order to improve the sustainable maritime transport.
- Is fully aware of the challenges faced by the maritime transport industry (ship-owners, port authorities) in order to fulfill by 2020 the requirements of the **Sulphur directive for maritime fuels**. It will help regional authorities to provide support to their respective stakeholders and will promote all relevant initiatives/projects aiming at ensuring an appropriate coverage of the Mediterranean coast with Liquefied Natural Gas fuelling facilities.
- Advocates for a quick and tailored **implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative in the Mediterranean Regions**, among the most touched by the crisis that must rely on their best practices, ensuring the efficient expenditure of the allocated resources.
- Manifests its satisfaction for the recent launch of the project “**Vasco da Gama-VdG: training for greener and safer maritime transport**”, designed by the CPMR along the lines of a ‘Maritime Erasmus’ aiming to improve the skills of persons employed in the European shipping industry with the goal to address two specific challenges, namely maritime safety and the reduction of environmental damage. IMC CPMR also looks with interest at the new framework initiative recently started by the Union for the Mediterranean concerning the promotion of student mobility across the Mediterranean region. In this frame, the IMC will reflect on the possibility to extend the VdG initiative to the South Mediterranean.

In this context, the IMC Political Bureau also **approves**:

- ❖ **The Declaration of Ljubljana on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Mediterranean Buildings**, as the result of the first part of the capitalisation process of three European projects - Elih-Med, Proforbiomed and Marie. The IMC CPMR underlines in particular the relevance of the commitment about the creation of a new model of multi-level governance for the implementation of policies for energy renovation and renewable energy in buildings, where the Regions and Cities will have to play a key role politically and financially speaking. The declaration of Ljubljana will be further developed by the promoting partners during 2014 in a more detailed policy paper.
- ❖ **The general lines of the IMC CPMR draft road map on Macro-Regional strategies in the Mediterranean** and proposes to share it with the Members States, the ARLEM, The Union for the Mediterranean and other key stakeholders, in order to further develop its contents and achieve a common vision by the end of the year, under the Italian presidency of the EU that may be fundamental for establishing the bases to new emerging Macro-Regional Strategies in the basin.

⁹ Mediterranean Corridor, Baltic-Adriatic, Orient/East-Med, Scandinavian-Mediterranean, Rhine Alpine, Atlantic.