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CPMR INTERMEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION

Final Declaration

CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly

28/29 June 2018 - Patras (Dytiki Ellada-GR)

This document constitutes the Final Declaration of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly, gathered on 28/29 June 2018 in Patras (Dytiki Ellada-GR).

It is thus intended as a CPMR Intermediterranean Commission contribution to the debates on the future of the EU, cohesion and the multilevel cooperation at basin level. It includes reflections on emerging strategies and initiatives, migration, neighbourhood, maritime affairs, climate, environment, energy efficiency, transport & accessibility, amongst other themes.

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In continuity with the previous Declarations of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (IMC)¹, the members of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly wish to transfer a set of political messages to EU, Euro-Mediterranean and International Institutions as the main Mediterranean stakeholders. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

I. FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK: MEDITERRANEAN VIEWS

1. **Witnesses** the evolution of the European project with pride but also some concerns when facing its internal and external uncertainties. Coupled with the Brexit aftermath, the challenges connected to migration and geopolitical instabilities, the latest elections results in various EU and non-EU countries and regions have clearly showed growing discrepancies between Mediterranean territories interests – some Europhile, others Eurosceptic – threatening to weaken the unity of the Union and the good cooperation dynamics so far established in the Mediterranean with EU and non-EU countries and regions alike.
2. **Calls** the EU to keep strengthening its relations with Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) through an effective and open Neighborhood Policy in the current and the 2021-2027 period, hence contributing to recovering a positive attention of EU and third countries towards the Mediterranean area.
3. **Reiterates** that Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) are oftentimes at the forefront to face the impacts of many EU and Mediterranean challenges. LRAs must therefore remain central in decision-making processes and in the implementation of decisions thereof, whether it be in terms of sustainable socio-economic development, climate change, migration, and other topics all the most as important, in a multilevel governance framework.
4. **Stresses** that the current calendar is of crucial importance for the future of the European Union (EU) and the Mediterranean, being at the crossroad of two programming periods, while the mandates of the EU Parliament and Commission are entering their last phases. The EU is debating over the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the post-2020 period in a difficult global political and economic context, and due to the emergence of new priorities, is calling into question the future of Cohesion Policy. It is difficult to imagine that the EU could tackle everything properly, strengthening the overall EU project, with just a slight increase of resources compared to the current programming period – as proposed by the European Commission (EC) on the past 2/5 - and a sensitive reduction of budget in some crucial areas such as Cohesion Policy or the funds connected to Maritime affairs or Transport.

THE MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK: FOR A STRONG BUDGET SERVING THE EU PROJECT, AND A RENEWED & UPDATED POST-2020 COHESION POLICY

5. **Observes** that the Mediterranean regions of Europe are still suffering from substantial disparities and are vulnerable in the context of fierce global competition. Recent statistics show that although economic recovery is well under way, many Mediterranean regions remain significantly behind in economic, social, employment, and youth insertion terms². These disparities go against the very essence of the EU, which promotes territorial, economic and social cohesion.
6. **Fully supports** the CPMR Policy Position on the post-2020 EU Budget, which should reflect the ambitions of the EU and its priorities. A post-2020 EU budget with less resources to address more priorities would give the worst possible signal to European citizens and would greatly contradict its main function as an investment budget. Negotiations after the EC proposal in May are still long and complex and the budget risks to see reductions in some of the areas where the Mediterranean regions are more directly concerned.
7. **Considers** that the EU budget for the post-2020 period should reflect on the recent social, economic and territorial trends and calls for a stronger place-based approach within all EU policies as well as actions to

¹ ([Barcelona 2013](#), [Patras 2014](#), [Venice 2014](#), [Marseilles 2014](#), [Nafplio](#) and [Rabat 2015](#), [Venice 2016](#), [Barcelona 2017](#), [Campania 2017](#))

² See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/GDP_at_regional_level and http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics_at_regional_level#Regional_unemployment_rates_and_the_EU_average (May 2018)

address rising regional disparities and the rise of ‘middle-income regions.’ Complementarity between EU funds (under shared management and centrally managed) should also be guaranteed to face “integrated” challenges (such as transport or research and innovation policies) which no single EU policy or fund could pretend to address on its own.

8. **Calls for** the EU budget for the post-2020 period to provide LRAs sufficient leeway and the flexibility they need to realise EU objectives at territorial level in line with their regional development strategies, particularly regarding programmes under shared management and considering the “smart regional concentration” concept.
9. **Fully supports** the Cohesion Alliance initiative launched in October 2017 by the European Committee of the Regions together with several European associations of cities and regions³, including the CPMR and several of its Mediterranean members, which asks for a stronger and more visible Cohesion Policy beyond 2020.
10. **Considers** that realising the potential of blue growth and fighting climate change are two overarching priorities at EU level – especially important for the Mediterranean regions - which require a concerted effort from the EC so that EU funds and programmes – both centrally managed as under shared management – are conceived to continue to address both these priorities after 2020.

❖ REACTIONS TO THE COMMISSION’S PROPOSAL ON THE POST-2020 EU BUDGET⁴

11. **Regrets** that despite rising regional disparities and the decline of many EU regions in terms of regional GDP, especially Mediterranean ones⁵, and although Cohesion Policy would continue to cover all EU regions, the Commission proposes to reduce Cohesion Policy and to increase national co-financing rates. This means that Cohesion Policy would possibly reduce its EU added value to citizens and induce differences among regions that could jeopardize the coherence of the policy itself.
12. **Is concerned** by the EC proposing to directly link the new ESF+ fund to the implementation of structural reforms in Member States, since social cohesion has always been a core objective of Cohesion Policy, and touches on key areas of regional competences. Besides, considering the high unemployment rate in most Mediterranean Regions and the urgent need to tackle youth unemployment in particular, it is essential that regions are duly involved in the management of the new ESF+ fund.
13. **Welcomes** the five new thematic objectives for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund proposed by the EC, which offer a stronger territorial dimension, in particular the ‘Europe closer to citizens’ objective and its specific focus on coastal areas. It also welcomes the increase in the budgets allocated to youth policies, and underlines the experience of regional authorities in programmes which promote the internationalisation of education.
14. **Is worried** about the proposed budgetary reductions to the European Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), despite the need to boost Blue Growth and infrastructures that shall improve the sustainable socio-economic development and the accessibility of peripheral and maritime Mediterranean regions.
15. **Celebrates** the overall increase of the budget for External Action with its new “unified” Neighborhood Development International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) rationalizing many existing instruments (and including the EU Development Fund), as well as for Pre-Accession Assistance and Migration issues, which is distributed under different headings, policies and funds (e.g. new Asylum & Migration Fund, Cohesion Policy, NDICI). Nevertheless, it is concerned about the governance of several of the connected policies and programmes that will be launched and the specific role that the regions deserve, based on the added value they can provide, as policy makers, key implementers and beneficiaries, at the same time.
16. **Supports** the proposal to make the EU budget more flexible, namely the ‘Union reserve’ financed by unspent funds to tackle emergencies and unforeseen events as well as the possible use of the Emergency Aid Reserve, currently designed for non-EU countries, for crises inside the EU. This could be of great help in the management of emergencies and crises, which could affect Mediterranean regions.

³ Among which the CPMR and its geographical commissions, including most Intermediterranean Commission members

⁴ Having regard to the Commission’s proposal on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the 2021-2027 period and on the basis of the analysis issued by the CPMR General Secretariat “How does the post-2020 EU budget support CPMR priorities?” (May 2018)

⁵ According to a recent CPMR forecast (March 2018)

17. **Welcomes** the proposed efforts towards simplification, such as the reduction of the number of programmes, the streamlining of the use of financial instruments through the InvestEU Fund, the reduction to one single rulebook, and the simplification and streamlining of State aid rules.
18. **Wonders** how regional authorities, their interest and the development banks in their territories will be involved in the InvestEU Fund. The four policy areas covered (sustainable infrastructure; research, innovation & digitisation; small & medium-sized businesses; social investment & skills) being all relevant to Mediterranean Regions and broad enough to contain all EU policy areas having an impact on the basin. It also wonders how synergies with other programmes or instruments in the EU budget will be practically shaped.

MEDITERRANEAN GLOBAL ISSUES & ACTIONS

❖ MIGRATION & ASYLUM

19. **Stresses** that Migration and Asylum need cross cutting and multilevel approaches to be tackled properly and that they must be considered a matter of rule of law and effective coordinated policies, not politics. At the same time, it is concerned by the lack of solidarity and results of the EU negotiations that initially expected an agreement in the June EU Council on the overall reform of the Common European Asylum System.
20. **Observes** that while EU Council negotiations are proceeding very slowly, most of the Intermediterranean Commission and CPMR regions are developing already – and despite budgetary issues and a diversified distribution of competences and expertise - accommodation, regional development and other inclusive and integration policies to cope with arrivals in a positive way, for both newcomers and host societies. They are also demonstrating once more their solidarity before humanitarian emergencies as in the case of [Aquarius](#), when several CPMR Intermediterranean Commission members offered to host asylum seekers rescued by the ship. This was only last example of a long series of offer of help coming from the regions to respond to the migration challenges.
21. **Calls** the EU Institutions to reinforce solidarity between Member States and territories, towards those in need of protection, and to foster territorial development and inclusive policies in the benefit of both newcomers and host communities. Legal and financial means should come along.
22. **Supports** the political recommendations addressed in the CPMR Issue Paper on '[Migration and Asylum in EU Regions: Towards a multilevel governance approach](#)' to which has strongly contributed enlightening the experiences, innovative practices, needs and vision of its Mediterranean regions. In particular:
 - i. Pushing for a [multilevel governance approach](#) when dealing with migration issues, hence acknowledging the key role of LRAs - complementary to the States – in proposing, supporting and implementing reception and integration policies on the ground.
 - ii. Urging for a proper [recast](#) of the [Common European Asylum System](#) (CEAS) that would need to mention Regions to a much better extent, acknowledging the reality of migration policy in their territories, the capacities and potential of LRAs and at the same time enforce the rule of law in a real unified EU system, which must avoid renationalization of border controls.
 - iii. Calling for a finer use, [convergence and complementarity of funding instruments](#) and tools such as the current Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Cohesion Policy and the new reformed instruments in the post-2020 period. For the future AMF, the EC should require Member States to directly engage the Regions in their National Programs for areas in which they have legal competences or when regional action is needed for the implementation of EU and Member States' goals, and when their participation can add value to EU-national actions to achieve their goals.
23. **Strongly welcomes** the higher budget and relevant references to the role of the regional authorities in the EC's regulation proposal for the new Asylum & Migration Fund (AMF) and its Annex, as well as the mention to the complementarity between the AMF and Cohesion Policy and ESF+, tackling medium-long term integration and also with the external dimension funds. In particular AMF draft regulations:
 - i. Support the action by national governments, LRAs and civil society groups engaged in fostering the short-term integration of third-country nationals in the host communities, and mutual trust.

- ii. Consider the crucial role played by LRAs and civil society organisations in the field of integration. To facilitate the access of these entities to funding at Union level, the draft regulation says that the Fund “should facilitate the implementation of actions in the field of integration by LRAs or civil society organisations, including through the use of the thematic facility and through a higher co-financing rate for these actions”. The EC’s proposal is allocating the 40% of the AMF increased budget (4.166 million euros) to the thematic facility (the rest is allocated to shared management with Member States).
 - iii. Foresee that thematic facility shall support actions falling under specific measures implemented by the local and regional authorities or civil society organisations, which is corresponding to “promoting early integration measures for the social and economic inclusion of third-country nationals, preparing their active participation in and their acceptance by the receiving society, in particular with the involvement of local or regional authorities and civil society organisations”.
 - iv. Class integration measures implemented by LRAs and civil-society organisations as “actions eligible for higher co-financing” together with “Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programmes and related-activities targeting vulnerable persons and applicants for international protection with special reception and/or procedural needs, including measures to ensure effective protection of children in migration, in particular those unaccompanied”.
 - v. Support Member States in setting-up “strategies organising legal migration, enhancing their capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate in general all immigration and integration strategies, policies and measures for legally staying third-country nationals, including Union legal instruments”. The regulations says that AMF should also “support the exchange of information, best practices and cooperation between different departments of administration and levels of governance, and between Member States”.
 - vi. State a principle of complementarity between the support of the AMF and national, regional and local interventions.
24. **Commits** to contribute to extend the CPMR work of analysis on the needs and experience of the regions in the external dimension of migration during the year to come, enlightening the existing networks of international cooperation and dialogue, the specific experiences and demands/ needs to cooperate of the EU Regions with their non-EU counterparts in matters directly or indirectly related to Migration & Asylum policies. Regions, together with local authorities, have an added value to provide to this cooperation and will thus need to find their right place in the funding instruments & programmes post-2020 (e.g. AMF/NDICI). The Intermediterranean Commission wonders how in practice the coordination and complementarity between the AMF and the NDICI will be set-up.

❖ EXTERNAL ACTION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

25. **Supports** the ambitious envelope proposed in the EC’s MFF proposal for the “Neighborhood & the World” heading and in particular the new unified Neighborhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that would rationalize many existing instruments, and the envelope for Pre-Accession Assistance.
26. **Welcomes** the geographical focus on the Neighbourhood, Africa and Western Balkans of the new Instrument that seems promising for the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission sphere of cooperation, the broad approach of the draft NDICI regulation on cross-border cooperation, the attention attributed to the external dimension of the migration challenge as well as the references along the draft regulation to the regions (even if only few), blue economy/growth, climate & energy, the SDGs, macro-regional and sea basin strategies, migration & mobility.
27. **Wonders** if the reference in the annex to the NDCI draft regulation to “local authorities” in the section about partnerships within the area of “global challenges” for the thematic programmes refers also to regions: “Increasing the capacity of EU and Southern local authority networks, platforms, and alliances to ensure a substantive and continued policy dialogue in the field of development and to promote democratic governance, notably through the Territorial Approach to Local Development”. Regions and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission shall be directly concerned as they are developing relevant initiatives with an Integrated Territorial Development approach.

28. **Reaffirms** the need to “Territorialize” and increase the involvement of Local and Regional Authorities in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the importance of associating the ENP with the promotion of emerging macroregional or sea basin initiatives or strategies by capitalizing on the added value of decentralized and territorial cooperation, and taking inspiration from the partnership driven approach of Cohesion Policy. The new NDICI shall support those strategies and initiatives through a smart earmarking of resources and consequent multilevel mechanisms of coordination.
29. **Hopes** that the budget negotiations will be ensuring an equal or higher budgetary envelope under the European Neighborhood Policy and the new NDICI for cross-border cooperation (CBC) in the post 2020 period, compared to the current programming period, and with an overall effort of the EU to harmonize the regulatory framework for territorial cooperation at EU level (e.g. in the case of CBC programmes under the ENP that are currently funded by the ENI and the ERDF, at the same time). This should allow more effective structured synergies and coordination between programmes in the 2021-2027 period that would benefit both Managing Authorities and beneficiaries.
30. **Calls** for a strong involvement of LRAs in the setting-up, implementation and possibly in the governance of the new programmes with a territorial impact under the future NDICI.
31. **Proudly witnesses** the positive outcomes of the Training on Integrated Territorial Development (ITD) held in Casablanca (April 2018) aiming to raise awareness on an ITD approach to the delivery of public service in the Mediterranean.
32. **Will support** any initiative aiming to the replication of this training in Intermediterranean Commission territories and beyond, whether it be through existing instruments, the future NDICI, on a transversal approach to integrated territorial development, or a more sectoral one (tourism, MSP/ICZM, social and solidarity economy, environmental sustainability, etc.). The Intermediterranean Commission will also ensure a thorough follow-up of ITD issues through the synergies with partner organizations (UfM, UNDP, etc.).

❖ CLIMATE ACTION

33. **Underlines** that Mediterranean regions are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change on the ground (rising sea levels, coastal erosion, droughts and floods, etc.) and are on the front line when it comes to experience the signs of climate change.
34. **Recalls** that the regional scale is particularly suitable for designing effective climate change adaptation/mitigation strategies, as Regions are closer to citizens, and are more flexible to implement innovative solutions compared to national governments as many related issues fall under regional competences.
35. **Recognizes** the importance of improving the knowledge on the environmental, social and economic effects of climate change and transferring it from the scientific community to policy-makers. In this regard, it welcomes the task of existing regional expert panels on climate changes⁶, and expresses the highest interest for the results of the 1st Assessment Report on Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean being prepared by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC).
36. **Acknowledges** the strategic relevance of the big data as one of the most important priorities to improve the knowledge on climate change, sustainable territorial development as well as on other key policies such as health, aging, education, society and above all innovation, as mentioned in the EuroHPC (High Performance Computing) Declaration signed in Rome on 23rd March 2017.
37. **Strongly supports** the candidacy of at least a Mediterranean Region ⁷ to host one of the four exascale supercomputing infrastructures that will be acquired and assigned in the coming months to four hosting entities in Europe. This opportunity could give an added technological value to the definition and implementation of more effective and innovative, “knowledge based” Mediterranean strategies, providing extremely useful elements to both, the scientific community as well the public administrations and the private sector.

⁶ Such as the ones that exist and operate in the Balearic Islands, Catalonia and the Region Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur.

⁷ Emilia-Romagna

38. **Welcomes** the ambitious proposals from the EC on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), including the earmarking of 25% of EU expenditure for climate objectives and the importance given to the environment, considering the high vulnerability of maritime regions towards the effect of climate change.
39. **Will promote** exchanges of experiences and views among Intermediterranean Commission Regions in relation with the forthcoming related EU legislation and measures (commitments regarding CO₂ emissions in their territories and policies aimed to the fulfilment of these objectives).
40. **Stresses** the inputs provided by the “Shaping a new generation of decentralized cooperation” report commissioned by the CPMR and in particular for what regards the localization of the 2030 Agenda in CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Regions, which will keep promoting.
41. **Warmly welcomes** its collaboration revival with nrg4SD with regards to its works on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) by regional governments throughout the world. The Intermediterranean Commission fully supports its topical report, to which has contributed, stressing the peculiarities of the territories the CPMR and the Intermediterranean Commission cover and the relevant links to specific SGDs as n°6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.⁸ The Intermediterranean Commission hopes for a successful presentation of such report during the United Nations’ next High Level Political Forum (July 2018), and will ensure its dissemination through its network upon official publication.
42. **Reaffirms** its full support to the Bologna Charter (BC) and its Joint Action Plan (JAP) on adaptation to climate change in coastal areas, which has now 28 signatory Regions, plus the formal endorsement of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (since 2013) and of several Mediterranean countries. Beyond actively participating to the reviewing process of its Joint Action Plan (JAP) through the Bologna Charter’s Coordination Board Task force, the Intermediterranean Commission will keep supporting its implementation through the elaboration of specific projects and actions involving its member Regions, and will keep promoting the direct adhesion and participation of new Med Regions.
43. **Stresses** the importance of the Bologna Charter as a strong incentive for actions towards the protection and sustainable development of Mediterranean coastal areas and its particular relevance with regard to the EU and the Euro-Mediterranean agenda.
44. **Welcomes** the fact that the Bologna Charter has had an actual impact on EU policies, initiatives and programmes, and will keep promoting and disseminating its results and good practices through its extensive network.⁹

II. TOWARDS REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: STRENGTHENING MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE & TERRITORIAL COOPERATION IN RELATION WITH STRATEGIES & POLICIES WITH A STRONG IMPACT IN THE REGIONS

SYNERGIES WITH EMERGING STRATEGIES, INITIATIVES, AND FRAMEWORKS OF COOPERATION ABLE TO STRENGTHEN MED COOPERATION & MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND BLUE GROWTH

45. **Reaffirms** its full support to the West MED initiative and its Framework for Action, which retook several proposals made by Intermediterranean Commission Regions. The Intermediterranean Commission also welcomes its Declaration and Annex on Governance, which officially recognises the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission as observer in its Steering Committee (SC).

⁸ Respectively, “clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; industry, innovation and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnerships for the goals.” See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> (May 2018).

⁹ For example, the Interreg MED Operational Program 2014-2020 acknowledges the Charter as a reference initiative for regional cooperation on coastal risks. The Charter was also quoted in the recent EU WESTMED initiative’s Framework for Action [SWD(2017) 130 final], in the conclusions of the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy (8 November, Brussels) and WG on Environment and Climate (14-15 March, Barcelona). It was officially acknowledged by the Ministries of Environment of Italy, France, Greece, Israel and by the Ministry of Infrastructures and Communication of Cyprus. On a policy point of view, it contributed to the MSP Directive formulation, in particular the elements included in Art.8 (aggregates-sediments, off-shore elements) and influenced the BLUEMED initiative Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) formulation, in particular the 12 Goals and related actions of the SRIA.

46. **Will keep monitoring** the implementation of the initiative on the ground in a constructive way by conveying messages from its members and promoting actions carried out, interacting with the Steering Committee and the forthcoming Assistance Mechanism of the initiative. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission has already mapped and presented to the SC the potential synergies between its activities, several key projects and actions delivered by its regions in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and the ones preliminarily identified under the West MED Framework for Action. This work contributed to the reflection on the priorities of the initiative and the Intermediterranean Commission will keep contributing to the reflections searching for synergies for the implementation of concrete actions on the ground that consider the needs and added values of its member regions.
47. **Calls on** the EC and involved countries to better align the initiative with existing EU, national and regional funding schemes relevant to the initiative's goals and future priority actions.
48. **Will keep monitoring and supporting** the [EUSAIR](#) implementation in coordination with the CPMR Task force on the Adriatic Ionian (AI) Strategy and the Intermediterranean Commission relevant thematic Working Groups, supporting new EU projects and coordination actions among different kind of stakeholders.
49. **Welcomes** the creation of the [Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Enterprises and Cities](#) (AI-NURECC) initiative – led by the CPMR, aiming at the EUSAIR implementation, ensuring deep and broad territorial coverage, at regional and local level. Will keep supporting EUSAIR bodies by promoting a more structured dialogue among key AI public and private stakeholders.
50. **Reiterates** the importance to foresee structured synergies and communication between the EUSAIR and the West MED initiative, to foster exchanges of experiences at all levels, complementarities and coordination towards the long-term objective of a Mediterranean integrated strategy. In this sense, it stresses the need for a comprehensive liaising effort among these and other complementary strategies, key players and funding and fully endorses the methodology and actions foreseen by the [Interreg MED PANORAMED governance project](#).
51. **Reaffirms** its support to the [BLUEMED](#) initiative on research and innovation for promoting the blue economy in the Mediterranean and its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda ([SRIA](#)) as an incentive and structured framework to boost cooperation between relevant stakeholders and contribute to the creation of new 'blue' jobs, social wellbeing and a sustainable growth in marine and maritime sectors. It enlightens in particular its satisfaction for the opening of the initiative to all Mediterranean Countries through the Union for the Mediterranean.
52. **Welcomes** its participation as observer in the Group of Senior Officials (GSO) BLUEMED Working Group (BLUEMED-WG) as well as in the BLUEMED Coordination and Support Action (CSA)'s Policy Platform and will keep monitoring and supporting the activities of the initiative, which SRIA and Implementation plan are being reviewed, consolidated and conceived, by feeding the reflection on relevant fields based on the outcomes of the projects and related works in which the Intermediterranean Commission participates. The Intermediterranean Commission also supports specifically the [call for Start-up actions](#) and the forthcoming BLUEMED week in October 2018.
53. **Recognises** the efforts of the Interreg MED [InnoBlueGrowth](#) project towards increasing the transnational activity of innovative clusters and networks of key blue growth sectors – i.e. blue energies, yachting, and maritime surveillance – of the Mediterranean area. Will keep playing an active role in sharing and disseminating of knowledge and results among policy-makers, entrepreneurs and citizens, and the orientation of investments directed to specific blue growth sectors. The Intermediterranean Commission also recognizes the efforts and the potential for synergies with the [GreenGrowth](#) Community of Interreg MED programme.
54. **Reaffirms** its support to the works of the UfM on the Blue Economy (BE) where the Intermediterranean Commission is directly involved as well as the ones on climate and environment. The Intermediterranean Commission also welcomes the successful reshaping of the UfM [Virtual Knowledge Centre](#) and the organisation of the 1st Regional Stakeholder conference on Blue Economy in Naples in November 2018 to which the Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions strongly contributed. The Intermediterranean Commission looks forwards to contribute to the next Stakeholder Conference and works on BE, in view of the future ministerial meeting.

55. **Will keep playing an active role** in the activities related to all these Mediterranean Initiatives, strategies and framework for actions, capitalising on projects in which it is involved – such as Interreg MED InnoBlueGrowth, BleuTourMed, CO-EVOLVE, MITOMED+, etc. – so as to contribute to the reflections of the policy level and implementation of concrete actions, in particular through its Working Groups and Task Forces (e.g. on the Follow-up in the Regions of the UfM's agenda on Blue Economy).
56. **Will keep monitoring** the activities of [PRIMA](#) (Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) and its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda ([SRIA](#)), in particular the actions and calls of relevance for Intermediterranean Commission Members.¹⁰

FUTURE OF TERRITORIAL COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

57. **Emphasizes** that European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) is one of the two objectives of Cohesion Policy that fosters cooperation and experimentation across European and Mediterranean regions and key territorial stakeholders. ETC allows to reinforce the competitiveness of a transnational and cross-border space, both within the EU and its Neighborhood, which make it a real investment policy for the territories. The Intermediterranean Commission is proudly involved with its Regions in several projects worth almost 35 million euros overall.
58. **Calls for** the reinforcement of ETC programmes for the post-2020 period so as to ensure long-lasting results and better impact on the ground and ask to preserve the maritime cross-border cooperation, both internal and external, whether or not there is any fixed link, which is fundamental at Mediterranean level in sectors like maritime safety, blue growth, marine and coastal management and environmental protection.
59. **Deplores** the fact that maritime cross-border cooperation both the internal and the external, vital for achieving an effective cohesion between citizens and the territories in which they live, is not sufficiently recognised in the legislative proposal which seems to go against the concept of strengthening European territorial continuity for the benefit of all the European citizens.
60. **Rejects** the fact that the legislative proposal favours the areas in which there is a fixed link compared to those in which there is not any fixed link, thereby generating discrimination between territories.
61. **Stresses** the necessity of considering functional areas in the future programmes, which reflect the reality of maritime cross-border regions with Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) without a fixed link, especially where there were pre-existing programmes operating in those areas.
62. **Deeply regrets**, the substantial decrease of the ETC budget proposed by the Commission despite the tangible added-value that ETC brings to European citizens. A final reduction of the ETC envelope would indeed contradict the overall recognition by the EC that the territorial cooperation entails a real European added value. It also regrets about the reduction of the co-funding rate (70% in the EC's regulation proposal), which will mean a reduction of opportunities for local and regional actors to participate in future projects, especially at Mediterranean level.
63. **Underlines** that ETC programmes should pay particular attention to maritime borders, as the maritime component is strongly present in most of the Mediterranean programmes, and be aligned to respective strategies or initiatives (including, and in particular, macroregional strategies and sea-basin strategies/initiatives) at EU, Euro-Mediterranean, national, regional, local and basin levels. ETC programmes should also enable cooperation among insular territories that belong to a same sea basin, thus enhancing the level of complementarity between ETC, mainstream and other EU programmes.
64. **Asks** the EC to further involve LRAs in discussions on the future governance of ETC and on possible changes in the architecture and geography of ETC programmes in the Mediterranean area, since they act as Managing Authorities and beneficiaries and therefore have a true vision of ETC implementation on the ground.
65. **Calls for** ETC programmes to be more flexible so as to better consider the diversity of territories, area-specific themes and criteria inside cooperation areas. ETC programmes should adopt a more open approach, leaving

¹⁰ Such as watersaving solutions, nutrition/Mediterranean diet, food and water chain efficiency, land and water sustainability in arid and semi-arid watersheds, policies and governance of water management systems.

the room to deal with complementary issues related to socioeconomic challenges inherent to Mediterranean maritime and peripheral regions, when needed.

66. **Considers** that ETC programmes, especially cross-border ones, should be conceived in a more flexible way, so as to allow higher/significant investments in infrastructures and/or transport related services, and in full complementarity with other infrastructure programmes (H2020, CEF, to cite a few).
67. **Regrets** its ineligibility as full partner, neither directly nor with a “flexibility” type rule, under the last calls of the ENI CBC MED and Interreg ADRION programmes. Considers, more generally, that the eligibility of projects should be more flexible for parties located outside the programmes’ eligible area provided that their action is deemed relevant and have an impact on the related area.
68. **Supports** the strengthening of structured synergies between Interreg and ENI CBC programmes covering the Mediterranean area as well as between mainstreaming and other thematic programmes. Also considers that closer cooperation and continuous exchange of information is needed to improve the complementarities and consistency between programmes, in particular concerning the main emerging needs and the different ways to reach best results, among the different programmes’ Managing Authorities.
69. **Insists** on the importance to boost the participation of territorial actors coming from Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) in territorial cooperation programmes.
70. **Reaffirms** its support to the PANORAMED project (Interreg MED Axis 4 project on governance) for its efforts towards an improved and shared Mediterranean governance, and to emerging initiatives and strategies, as well as to Interreg ADRION’s work supporting the EUSAIR, and specifically through its own Axis 4. Reaffirms the need to include Innovation in this future Mediterranean governance as a priority for its sustainable development.
71. **Asks** the EC for an inclusive approach when defining the future geography of programmes, avoiding jeopardizing the good dynamics of cooperation already in place at basin level (e.g. thanks to the Interreg MED or ENI CBC MED programmes). In case of a re-organisation of transnational and maritime cross border programmes per sub-basin areas, warns that it would not be feasible without setting up in the regulation a proper mechanism of co-ordination enabling to maintain a wide well-functioning Mediterranean partnership. And even in the case of unifying or merging some specific programmes, the process would need to pay a special attention to co-ownership and direct participation of the Non-EU IPA and Mediterranean Partner Countries.
72. **Will pursue** its actions in favour of the reinforcement of territorial cooperation for the post-2020 period, on the basis of the policy position “The future of Territorial Cooperation in the Mediterranean”, adopted by the Intermediterranean Commission on 29 June 2018 which includes a set of specific recommendations to the competent institutions and reflections on 3 future scenarios for improving the organization and the impact of the programmes at Mediterranean level in the 2021-2027 period.

MARITIME ISSUES AND INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY, ACCESSIBILITY & TRANSPORT

❖ INVESTMENTS FOR TRADITIONAL AND EMERGING SECTORS

73. **Advocates** for a more extensive allocation and streamlining of funds in support to maritime investments, strategies, and initiatives that have a maritime component (EUSAIR, West MED, among others).
74. **Notes** that the Commission’s proposals on the post-2020 EU budget seem to open significant opportunities for maritime projects to be funded via key post-2020 EU programmes, such as the share of ‘Horizon Europe’ budget dedicated to a specific “Ocean mission”; the new InvestEU Fund supporting a thematic investment platform for research and innovation in the Blue economy; the ERDF and Cohesion Fund’s new thematic objective ‘A greener and carbon free Europe’ supporting green and blue investment. The Intermediterranean Commission calls for a specific attention and implementation of actions on the Mediterranean area.
75. **Is extremely concerned** by the budget proposed for the EMFF (15% cut compared to the previous period), which will have a negative impact on the support to fisheries and aquaculture sectors (which today account for almost 72% of the EMFF budget) at EU and Mediterranean level, and to the other priorities proposed for the EMFF around the blue economy and international governance.

76. **Worries** about the abovementioned MFF cuts in particular regards fisheries and aquaculture. The Intermediterranean Commission reminds that to be able to concretely implement the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), funding is necessary to support the adaptation of traditional and emerging fisheries sectors alike to its requirements (environmental, social, and economic sustainability, maximum sustainable yield (MSY), landing obligation, improved selectivity, etc.). These adaptation processes are most of the time very costly, and would greatly benefit from a better and simplified spending allocation of the EMFF over the next programming period.
77. **Calls for** a greater accessibility of the new InvestEU fund to projects with a smaller budget adapted to the regional needs, and to group together projects such as territorial platforms which can include several Regions. This would enable greater EFSI support for maritime projects in emerging sectors in the Mediterranean such as marine energies and blue biotechnologies, in traditional and evolving sectors, and for maritime transport investment (ports and vessels).
78. **Favors** – as stated in the conclusions of the last InnoBlueGrowth project event on marine energies ([link](#)) – the creation of a special fund for blue energy (projects) in the Mediterranean region, combining private and public partnerships, especially because funds are usually not easily allocated to fund marine energies that are still considered as a risky market:
- i. EU spending for blue energies are closer to R&D phases, and focus less on segments closer to the market, which is missing. More capital is needed for the development of blue energies in the basin through closer investments to the market.
 - ii. More links need to be drawn with EFSI even though most projects for blue energies are located in Northern Europe.
 - iii. Resorting to EFSI, using finance engineering and improving synergies of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the smaller projects which are not financed much is also clearly needed.
 - iv. Investment in blue energies are part of many regions' priorities, notably through their regional smart specialization strategies (RIS3 – structural funds). It is necessary to assess the potential of regions, with regions and processes at sea-basin level (e.g. West MED, UfM, BlueMed) to support a joint identification of potential bankable projects, to set-up mechanisms ("funds of funds" types), and to answer to the identified needs in terms of technical assistance (training, etc.) so that all actors can learn how to use those tools for investments.
79. **Reminds** the importance of capitalizing the results of ongoing ([MAESTRALE](#), [PELAGOS](#), [iBLUE](#), [PROteuS](#), [MISTRAL](#), [4helix+](#), etc.) and future cooperation projects on marine renewable energies, yachting, maritime surveillance, and cluster processes, which implementations it actively follows through the [InnoBlueGrowth](#) Horizontal project ([Interreg MED](#))

❖ SUSTAINABLE MARITIME & COASTAL TOURISM AND CULTURE

80. **Reaffirms** the messages included in the Intermediterranean Commission political agenda [Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean Regions](#) which sets joint present and future actions of Intermediterranean Commission Regions towards the promotion of sustainable tourism at Euro-Mediterranean level, valorising their specific experience, and includes specific messages to the EU and Euro-Mediterranean Institutions.
81. **Stresses** the importance of capitalizing on the cooperation [projects](#) related to maritime and coastal tourism and cultural heritage in which the Intermediterranean Commission and several of its member regions are involved, namely [CO-EVOLVE](#), [MITOMED+](#), [HERIT-DATA](#) and [BleuTourMed](#) (Interreg MED), [MEDCOAST4BG](#) (labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean), [CIVITAS DESTINATIONS](#) (H2020), as well as all future possible projects such as Co-Evolve4BG submitted under the first call of the [ENI CBC MED](#) programme, or initiatives seeking to improve related policies.
82. **Will keep promoting** new projects, initiatives, reflections and advocacy actions through its Task Force on Sustainable Tourism and Culture so as to address in an integrated way all the aspects related to the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems in coastal and maritime areas, as well as boost the economic development of the sector for more growth and jobs.

❖ INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

83. **Will keep monitoring** the implementation of the Strategy for the Marine Environment (MSFD) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) framework Directives, paying particular attention to land-sea interactions, the role of the regions and the coherence between these processes and territorial development.
84. **Underlines** the participation of the CPMR in the SIMWESTMED project, co-financed by the EMFF, that aims to support Member States in the implementation of the MSP Directive and to foster concrete initiatives in cross-border cooperation on MSP in the Western Mediterranean area.
85. **Reaffirms** its full support to the Bologna Charter's political framework and actions (and related Joint Action Plan) to foster ICZM and MSP, in particular its Joint Action 2.1 of Strategic Theme 2 "Sustainable use of strategic resources for the Blue Growth of the Med coasts".
86. **Welcomes** the efforts and activities carried out by the UfM in the framework of its agenda on the Blue Economy related to ICZM and MSP, including the labelling of MEDCOAST4BG project, promoted by the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission with the CO-EVOLVE partnership.

❖ BLUE SKILLS AND EDUCATION

87. **Welcomes** the European Commission's (DG MARE) incentive for Blue Skills development following the 2016 'New Skills agenda for Europe' and the actions and calls for tenders thereof. With this in mind, the Intermediterranean Commission is proud to promote the Vasco da Gama Summer School (2-6/7/2018. Taranto, Italy) on "Navigation: Security and Environment" organized by the University of Bari in partnership with a set of key partners and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, as a follow up of the Vasco da Gama project (DG MOVE) and spin-off project of CPMR VdG Initiative in the Mediterranean. The Intermediterranean Commission will keep disseminating the Summer School's good practices to nourish future works on mobility for students, professors, researchers and workers throughout the Mediterranean, and in particular with the aim to reinforce skills linked to the maritime economy over the basin.
88. **Keeps** supporting all initiatives aiming at a better match between educational and training offer and maritime markets expectations in terms of skills.
89. **Supports** the sharing and dissemination of these projects knowledge and results among policy-makers, entrepreneurs and citizens, and the orientation of investments directed to specific blue growth sectors. The overall aim being the improvement of territorial policies, the creation of transnational clusters on sectors like blue energy and maritime surveillance, and to keep promoting innovation and R&D capacities, knowledge and technology transfer, transnational cooperation, and developing common understandings on challenges and collective solutions.

❖ ACCESSIBILITY & TRANSPORT

90. **Considers**¹¹ that improving accessibility in the EU and the Mediterranean has intrinsic territorial and transnational dimensions which require a meaningful involvement of the Regions.
91. **Recalls** the EC and the Members States the urgency to accelerate the implementation of infrastructures located on the CEF corridors affecting the Mediterranean –according to the priority projects for the regions– and the development of connections between them and the Motorways of the Seas. In particular, the prioritization of the works on the Mediterranean corridor, fully considering regional and local perspectives.
92. **Manifests** its will to contribute to reviewing core network maps so that Mediterranean regional priorities can be better considered into the TEN-T and corridor reviews, including for the Motorways of the Sea. Concerning the EC's proposal for the CEF 2 regulation issued on 6th June, the Intermediterranean Commission is thus ready to play its role contributing to CPMR works and reflections. The main objectives should be to dispose of enough budget in order to achieve the targets before 2030 for the 9 corridors, completing them in due

¹¹ In coherence with the CPMR position on the post-2020 budget.

time, and also to give regions a higher capacity of decision and more information on the implementation and governance process.

93. **Welcomes** that in the annex of the CEF draft regulation (in its part III) related to Core Network Corridors (CNCs) and “pre-identified sections on the comprehensive network”, the EC’s CEF2 proposal includes important connections for the Mediterranean regions such as the cross-border section Marseille-Genova, the connexion between Zaragoza and Bilbao, and the inclusion of the port of Palma de Mallorca in the Mediterranean Corridor, which were requested by the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission. **Regrets** that in the same part III of the CEF2 annex, the list of pre-identified sections of the CNCs, and specifically the missing links, proposed by the EC, is categorically incomplete.
94. **Deplores** that some amendments proposed by CPMR concerning the Intermediterranean Commission were not included in the EC’s proposal and complains that the ports were not included in the list of pre-identified cross-border sections of the comprehensive network (meaning a lower co-funding), which should be rectified. The Intermediterranean Commission commits to develop a comprehensive analysis of the gaps to contribute to the global CPMR position in the next few months, in parallel with the negotiations of the regulation.
95. **Encourages** the efficient implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP), so as to impulse and draw potential synergies with the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T) and TEN-T.
96. **Supports** the Commission’s initiative to reduce the transport sector’s impact on climate, as Maritime regions are the first to be affected by global warming and as the transport sector continues to experience increasing Green House Gas emissions. The Intermediterranean Commission therefore advocates for clean transport, clean shipping, the optimization of the performance of multimodal logistic chains and the development of multimodal corridors, among other all the most important issues.
97. **Reflects** on the benefits and challenges that the potential classification of the Mediterranean as a Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA) could mean for and bring to its Member Regions, bearing in mind the socio-economic, environmental, and spatial planning issues already existing in the basin.
98. **Renews** its interest in being more involved in the future implementation of the EU airport strategy, and in CPMR reflections on this theme, as it will have a considerable impact on Mediterranean coastal and insular regions’ accessibility, as on their socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

WATER, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

❖ WATER MANAGEMENT

99. **Calls** for the future legislative framework that will be updated for the Water Framework Directive (WFD) to take into account the role of the regions and the following points, as the Directive is so far not fully adapted to the peculiarities of the Mediterranean basins, and in particular concerning the environmental objectives pursued:
- i. A great number of Mediterranean basins present a fluvial region that has little to do with large rivers from the center and the north of Europe, in which in fact the water continuously flows.
 - ii. Problems of quality often arise from problems of quantity (structural hydric scarcity to which may be added circumstantial hydric scarcity due to drought), which are not tackled by the WFD.
 - iii. The use of sea water for urban supplies in the Mediterranean area is a growing trend that implies very significant energy and economic costs. The WFD should address these potentialities to a better extent so as to support investments in that sense.
100. **Reaffirms** its support to research and technologies development to improve the yields and efficiencies of water conveyance, as well as the reuse of reclaimed water through the use of renewable energies. This would allow a reduction in costs, while maintaining the food and agricultural sectors, and simultaneously stimulating technological leadership and employment in Mediterranean Regions.
101. **Commits** to increase its presence in *fora* on water in the context of European Institutions with a view to presenting the specific points of Mediterranean regions concerning water issues (e.g. on water supply as a public good) and collaboration with key players in the EU and Mediterranean landscape. It also reaffirms its

engagement in concrete cooperation projects on water management currently under evaluation under several programmes that could provide concrete responses to the regions' needs.

102. **Fully supports** the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and related activities of the UfM, in particular the [UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water in the Mediterranean](#) (April 2017) and the [Statement of the Conference on Water Governance in MENA and wider Mediterranean region](#) (Barcelona, December 2017), towards an integrated and better management of water resources in the Mediterranean.
103. **Endorses** the [analysis and recommendations for sustainable water resources management in touristic areas](#), elaborated in the framework of [CO-EVOLVE](#) project.
104. **Announces** that will support and be involved with its Working Group on “Water & Energy” and its regions in the “[Innovation and Water Technologies Fair - H2Orizon](#)” to be held in Seville from 19 to 21 September 2018 which has the aim to promote cooperation between companies, public administrations and experts, and to present elements, reflections and technologies that will determine the future of the sector.

❖ ENERGY EFFICIENCY

105. **Welcomes** and endorses once more the amendments concerning multi-level governance and the role of the Regions (which capitalize the experience of the Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions, e.g. MARIE, SHERPA, ELIH-MED and PROFORBIOMED), successfully integrated into the European Committee of the Regions' [opinion](#) on 'Energy efficiency and buildings', as well as in the '[Report](#) on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings.'
106. **Keeps on actively contributing** to the wide dissemination of the [SHERPA](#) project results, even beyond de Interreg MED cooperation area, which aims to reinforce the capacities of public administrations at regional and sub-regional level to improve energy efficiency in public buildings. SHERPA, with the support and synergy of an Intermediterranean Commission Task Force, will produce a Joint Action Plan on Energy Renovation in Mediterranean Buildings that will be endorsed by volunteer regions through the signature of *memoranda of understanding*.
107. **Fully supports** the [CESBA Neighbourhood award initiative](#) designed by the Interreg MED CESBA MED project launched in May 2019, that fosters the development of urban ecosystems, and commits to promote it among its members.

❖ ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

108. **Supports** the [CPMR Declaration on marine litter and plastic waste approved](#) by the CPMR Political Bureau. This includes the implementation of specific measures to reduce the use of plastics such as plastic bottles and other items in the framework of the activities of the Intermediterranean Commission. It also acknowledges the [conclusions](#) drawn from the last CPMR meeting on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution underlining the challenges faced by CPMR and Intermediterranean Commission territories, and the potential actions to undertake at all levels in the EU and at Mediterranean level.
109. **Commits** to fostering the sharing of good practices between its member Regions to tackle marine litter, as well as to supporting awareness raising campaigns should any arise. The Intermediterranean Commission will also make sure to contribute to potential CPMR works on relevant EU Regulation, to participate in relevant *fora* at EU and Mediterranean scale – notably through the works of the cooperation projects it participates in, and to extend, when need be, its collaboration with other networks.
110. **Reminds** the importance of capitalizing ongoing and future cooperation projects on marine litter and more broadly on biodiversity protection, notably through the Interreg MED Biodiversity Protection Community works. The Intermediterranean Commission will keep following their implementation through the [PANACeA](#) Horizontal project, in which it actively participates as well as specific modular projects within the community (e.g. AC4LITTER, AMAre, MedSeaLitter, PlasticBusters MPAs,).
111. **Reaffirms** its support to the “Our Ocean” Conference, initiated by the EU, that addresses a wide range of topics related to the sustainable management of our oceans and strongly focuses on biodiversity protection – i.e. climate change, maritime protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution – and will monitor the outcomes of the [2018 edition](#) (October 2018).

❖ BUILDING THE FUTURE MEDITERRANEAN: YOUTH, EDUCATION & MOBILITY, SOCIAL & SOLIDARITY ECONOMY, MED IDENTITY

112. **Observes** that Mediterranean regions are still suffering from high rates of unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, and related integration issues.
113. **Stresses** the need to boost the employability of young people through stronger cooperation among Mediterranean Regions in the field of higher education.
114. **Fully supports** the UNIMED petition for an Erasmus Mediterranean Generation aiming to promote the international dimension of the Erasmus programme and at widening it to Southern Mediterranean universities, as well as the elaboration of a new ARLEM report on “Youth and entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean”.
115. **Will keep working with and supporting** partners such as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM – Med4Jobs Initiative, or the New Chance Mediterranean project fostering professional integration or reintegration of young people by promoting exchanges of best practices); the Union of Mediterranean Universities (UNIMED) or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO – NET-MED Youth) to build stronger Mediterranean educational ties.
116. **Promotes** its prospective report on Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), highlighting the relevance and importance to improve the conditions for the consolidation of SSE at EU and Mediterranean levels. ESS is a viable alternative system to promote innovative ways of production, consumption and funding towards a more sustainable, solidary and inclusive model of development capable of valorizing youth, entrepreneurship, and the Mediterranean identity.

*Declaration approved unanimously
by the General Assembly of the Intermediterranean Commission, in Patras on 29 June 2018*