



MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION OF THE CPMR 26 November 2015 - Rabat (Rabat-Salé-Kénitra - Morocco)

I. MAIN DECISIONS OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU

The Political Bureau of the Intermediterranean Commission, at its meeting in Rabat, approved:

- The [Policy declaration](#) of the Political Bureau of Rabat;
- The **financial documents** of the Intermediterranean Commission;
- The **amendment of Article 7 of the rules** of the Intermediterranean Commission;
- The granting of membership of the Inter-Mediterranean Commission to the Regions of **Shkoder** and **Tirana** (Albania) and **Campania** (Italy).

The Bureau also supported the [declaration of the UCLG Mediterranean Commission](#) in which the Intermediterranean Commission officially participates. On this occasion, the Intermediterranean Commission was represented by several of its members and the secretariat for the two events of this Mediterranean Commission: The Policy Council and [the workshop on the quality of public services](#).

II. CONCLUSION OF THE WORK SESSION DISCUSSIONS

Abdessamad Sekkal, President of the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra Region, welcomed the participants.

Michel Vauzelle, President of the Intermediterranean Commission and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, recalled the close links between Morocco and the Mediterranean and welcomed the approach of this country that is moving towards a process of decentralisation, and this being despite the particularly tense current context, with an increase in terrorism and conflicts. He thus questioned the role of decentralised power in the defence of democracy, with the idea of bringing people closer to their elected representatives, by giving real financial capacity at regional level. Given that decentralisation means augmenting the power of democracy. However, **Michel Vauzelle** emphasised the need to ensure the protection of our Regions, in order to limit disparities and regional imbalances. He also explained, without renouncing the role of a strong metropolis for a strong Region, that we must fight against the idea of an ultra-libertarian metropolisation and advance the idea of centres for development that foster energy around them. He also explained why the Regions have a role to play in supporting young people in order to ensure the respect of our societies and in a broader sense the notions of living together, that the Republic holds so dear. Finally, he discussed the role of the media and called for more balanced information where violence becomes less commonplace.

Session I - Challenges and prospects of decentralisation in the Mediterranean: the processes of regionalisation and decentralisation in Morocco and in the basin and the added value of decentralised cooperation

Ali Sedjari, Professor at Mohamed V University of Rabat and President of GRETE (Group for Research and Studies on the Territories), returned to the notion of living together harmoniously and introduced the session by referring to humanism, an essential value in the crisis facing our world today. He welcomed Morocco's new elected members who will have to respond to many challenges, like security, cooperation and territoriality, in the context of a changing world. He called for a building of peace by addressing citizens directly, especially young people, in order that they begin to share common values. To do this, he talked about the need for a new governance of these notions and an essential notion, that of the territory. **Ali Sedjari** called for the establishment of new mechanisms within those territories by relying on civil society in order to adapt quickly in a spirit of cooperation. We must break down walls and foster integration. He thus explained that the Mediterranean is the only space that is not integrated into globalisation and that is going to be necessary to develop a pedagogy of

listening and understanding so that links be forged between all. This concept will be vital in the face of current threats in order to restore strength to universal notions.

Abdessamad Sekkal returned to the issue of regionalisation, which, in his opinion, represents an advantage for national cohesion in that it represents the expression of populations and of civil society. He believes it is essential to take into consideration local conditions and the concept of participatory democracy in order to promote cohesion in its broadest sense and the support of populations for different policies. He then referred to the notion of territorial competitiveness in the context of globalisation; a competitiveness that must be based on the specific characteristics of the territories in order to ensure the fairest possible growth. **Abdessamad Sekkal** then recalled the major stages of the decentralisation process in Morocco, with the latest advance established in the new texts of the constitution of 2011 where such concepts as free administration of local authorities and subsidiarity between the State and local communities or between communities themselves are talked about. According to him, the main challenge will be to ensure convergence between the different public policies and their closer adaptation to the needs of the territories. To achieve this, the idea is to work from two fundamental documents: the SRAT (regional plan for territorial development and the regional development programme drawn up for six years, and with an agency to implement the project. The big challenge will be to establish these new institutions and to change the approach taken for regional action. Lastly, **Abdessamad Sekkal** talked about the different missions and projects that have been launched, and the creation of new regions and the new way they are divided up (12 Regions) and the system of direct election.

Mohand Laenser, President of the Regional Council of Fez-Meknes, meanwhile, is focused on the challenges faced by the Moroccan Regions. He placed particular emphasis on the importance of the sense of belonging to a Region, something that does not really exist yet in Morocco. And this, according to him, is one of the great challenges of current reform. He talked about the fact that currently the focus is more on small communal dimension projects and that it's going to be necessary to work on developing a sense of belonging to a region in order to move towards membership of civil society and consider larger-scale projects. He reaffirmed the importance of cooperation networks.

Ali Sedjari agreed wholeheartedly with this and said that the citizen must be the central focus of policies and that it will be necessary to develop regional awareness and give real direction to regionalisation in order to ensure continuity and make the Region a sustainable organisation.

Meanwhile, **Massimo Toschi**, for the Region of Tuscany, made reference to the Tunisian experience and the strengthened processes. He also discussed his experiences in Mali or in Lebanon where different territorial organisations exist. According to him, the problem now consists of how these entities (cities, towns, provinces, regions, etc.) will be able to avoid a catastrophe in the Mediterranean. He recalled that it will be absolutely vital to take up the cultural challenge of reconciliation if we want to truly put an end to political instability.

Meanwhile, **Apostolos Papafotiou**, for the Peloponnese Region, talked about the successes of cooperation in Greece, particularly in its social dimension for populations. He recalled the budgetary problems, the burden of bureaucracy and its obstacles. But, a positive according in his opinion, a desire exists for strategic planning in order to overcome obstacles and respond to the needs of citizens. He also emphasised the notion of trust that needs to be developed between citizens in order to win their support for the different policies to be implemented.

Monika Bernhart, from the Veneto Region, presented the experience of regionalisation in Italy and the various stages of the process. She also gave examples of cooperation with Morocco and Tunisia, through agreement protocols, and sharing of experiences, etc.

Francesca Guardiola, for the Catalonia Region, spoke to point out the difference between decentralisation and devolution. The difference being around the issue of managing public resources. She also mentioned the subject of a genuine transfer of skills and, within this framework, guidance on budgetary matters. Finally, after a reminder of the regionalisation process in Spain, she stressed the need for financial autonomy in the application of policies.

Ali Sedjari concluded the session with a recall of the current crisis but emphasising the resilience and innovation that is required. According to him, we need to go beyond the "political", and take action in a context of constant social activity. The Regions must be a place of dialogue and consultation for creating intelligence.

Session II - Towards new European policies for migration and the neighbourhood: how to deal with cyclical and structural challenges in the Mediterranean

Michel Vauzelle introduced the session by recalling the role of territorial authorities in the Mediterranean and the added value of the Regions, as well as their role in migration policies. He recalled the actions taken by the Intermediterranean Commission with Sicily and the members in relation to migration issues, the "We are all Mediterranean" campaign, the exchange of good practices with Sicily, the meeting with the President of the European Parliament, the CPMR's Task Force on migration, etc. He reaffirmed that there has been a reaction from the EU but it is obviously not sufficient for changing the course of migration events. He also emphasised the concept of coexistence in the Mediterranean and on the idea of a community of destinies of populations from all sides of the basin.

Raul de Luzenberger, Minister and Deputy Head of the EU delegation in Morocco, explained the process of renewal of the [Neighbourhood policy](#), paying particular attention to the southern component in the Mediterranean and recalling the fundamental points, in particular the issue of migration, work on the Valletta summit and action plan, highlighting the beneficial experience of relying on the vision of African countries. He emphasised the role of the regions in Morocco, with the processes of decentralisation and regionalisation as a broad, open project, but also the processes of Rabat in relation to the management of migrants in the country of departure. Morocco is a model for Africa and the Sahel. He also stressed the importance of international cooperation for the development of territories and in order to respond to the challenges being faced.

Mohamed Sadiki, Vice-President of the Intermediterranean Commission, Regional Adviser of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra and Mayor of Rabat, spoke about the challenges facing the Mediterranean, in particular the issues of and prospects for cooperation for Moroccan Regions and the challenges linked to migration. He highlighted the elements of solidarity and sharing which are fundamental to migration issues, as well as the need for coherence between different policies. He then referred to the role of the EU and youth policies.

Jean-Claude Gayssot, First Vice-President of the Languedoc-Roussillon Region and special delegate of the Intermediterranean Commission for support for macro-regional and basin strategies, emphasised the dimension of macro-region proximity. The question of partnership must be seen as the solution for the Mediterranean. He also referred to the campaign "We are all Mediterranean" as he highlighted the work of President Vauzelle and recalled that the emergency is not just linked to the military or migration in the Mediterranean but that more work is needed on a humanitarian level and in relation to development. He particularly stressed the urgency of co-development and the need for a concrete response in international cooperation and European funds. He finished by stating that a clearer and more active role must be given to the Regions in the Neighbourhood Policy.

Francesca Guardiola emphasised the need for solidarity in response to the terrible events being faced and the need to solve problems of stability and the Mediterranean space at their roots. Tunisia must become an example of the democratisation process in the southern Mediterranean. And we must take advantage of the areas of cooperation that have been given to us (for example, the Neighbourhood Instrument and the new ENI CBC MED programme) so that all parties are playing the game and a new development is established. In this context, and within the context of the ENP in general, the role of the Intermediterranean Commission and local authorities must be clear. She recalled the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona process and the role and activities of the UfM, despite the limitations of its action.

Massimo Toschi, for the Tuscany Region, emphasised the fact that the EU should fund projects that can bring together Palestinians and Israelis more frequently, in order to contribute to a culture of reconciliation.

Ettayeb El Masbahi, Vice-President of the Oriental region, spoke to point out the causes of terrorism: despotism and poverty, that also cause the migratory movements with which we are familiar. The dehumanisation of people is at the source of the current tragedies. Without a genuine culture of cooperation in the Mediterranean, it will not be possible to make progress.

Abdessamad Sekkal recalled that many terrorists are from the 4th or 5th generation. So there is clearly a problem of integration which we need to tackle at its root.

Michel Vauzelle stressed the problem of poor management of information, with regard to the economic benefit of sensationalism, and the total rejection of fear. He also stated that there is a need to fight against the feeling of social exclusion. He then talked about the various major opportunities for integration between France and Morocco and referred to the north-south learning experiences that have been promoted, for example in artisan trades.

One of the Vice Presidents of the Council of Rabat spoke to stress the importance of involving young people, talking with them and preventing a generation gap.

Davide Strangis presented the contribution of the Emilia-Romagna Region, a pioneer in Italy with regard to the issue of receiving and integrating migrants. He also raised the issue of regionalisation of the neighbourhood policy and synergies with instruments for macro regional and basin strategies, recalling the positions of the Intermediterranean Commission and participation in the consultation on the ENP.

Finally, **Raul de Luzenberger** mentioned the ENI programmes and several CBCs, as well as the Mid Atlantic which will address in particular the process of regionalisation in Morocco. He also highlighted the role of the EU delegation which develops synergies with the regions.

IV. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

Davide Strangis, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, came back to the main messages of the CPMR and the Intermediterranean Commission, in connection with the themes and key points in our activities. He presented the [Rabat Declaration](#) and the Languedoc-Roussillon region presented two amendment proposals which were approved. The declaration was adopted unanimously by the members present in Rabat.

V. UPDATE ON THE INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION'S WORKING GROUPS, OTHER BUSINESS AND CONCLUSIONS

Guillaume Huet, for the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, recalled the main objective of the group which aims to work on the idea of a cohesion policy for the Mediterranean by contributing to the articulation of the various EU policies, particularly the neighbourhood policy. He spoke about the benefit of a vision that is as integrated as possible for the entire basin in order to integrate all stakeholders and to lead to the definition of new priorities and a structuring strategy. He also stressed the role of programmes for the creation of synergies. He summarised the activities of the working group on "territorial cooperation and macro-regional strategies", in connection with the work of the CPMR's Task Force and the pathways for synergies with the Sea and coastal areas intergroup. He concluded with the idea of involving the Member States in emerging strategies and particularly in the Western Mediterranean's maritime activity and the integrated strategies of the future. In this context, he thanked the Languedoc-Roussillon region for its work with the French government and the lobbying work carried out. He concluded by heralding the group's upcoming actions, particularly under the next Maltese Presidency of the Council, and within the scope of the different programmes that concern the Mediterranean.

Davide Strangis gave an assessment of the work for the "Water and energy" and "Transportation and Integrated Maritime Policy" groups. He started by highlighting the work on monitoring the water framework directive coordinated by Valencia and the prospects for future trade which will culminate in projects and the drafting of a policy document. A further meeting is planned in 2016. He also recalled the synergies between water and energy and works on the climate change and energy efficiency component that refer to the implementation of Ljubljana Declaration funding, a joint action plan and the presentation of the Sherpa project with Catalonia as leader of the Med programme. For the "Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy" group, he highlighted the work of the Bologna Charter and other related topics such as spatial maritime development, integrated coastal zone management, monitoring of the MSFD Directive, existing synergies with the European Commission and the CPMR on maritime investments and finally links with the SEARICA intergroup and the funding of projects such as Marina MED. He concluded with some news about emerging strategies and reports ahead of the European Parliament, and other actions and synergies with Mediterranean networks.

Thomas Lavaur, for the Languedoc-Roussillon Region, presented the activities of the "Economic and social cohesion" group. He recalled the main points of the action plan and referred to the work to capitalise on the social economy achieved through a questionnaire to which many Regions have already responded. A report will be produced soon. He explained that a group meeting is scheduled for the first half of 2016 for a presentation of the results of this questionnaire. Lastly, he spoke about the group's new areas of work: entrepreneurship, tourism promotion, promotion of mobility, integration and access to employment, intercultural dialogue, and projects like a Mediterranean Vasco da Gama.

Davide Strangis concluded with a [presentation](#) on internal issues and gave details of the [calendar](#) of activities for the coming months. He firstly presented the proposed amendment to the **rules** heralding a simple mechanism for counting on greater involvement of members of the Intermediterranean Commission in the Political Bureau in the case of full members being absent. The amendment was approved unanimously by the participants. The following paragraph is included in art.7: *In addition, each national delegation of the Bureau (group of Regions represented for each Member State) will be able to appoint a deputy member who may be called on, in exceptional cases (at the beginning and/or during the mandate) in order to participate in some of the Bureau's meetings when one of the full members from the same State cannot be present.*

He then presented **the activity report** and mentioned in particular the intensity of the work carried out by the Intermediterranean Commission. He recalled the reorganisation of the various working groups and gave an update of the various current and future **projects**, as well as the strategy for the first calls to major programmes in the Mediterranean. Finally, he presented the Intermediterranean Commission's **financial documents** and recalled that the accounts showed a slight deficit, which should be made up following the validation of certain projects, even though the accounts are surplus to prior years. **Davide Strangis** informed the participants of the membership of three new Regions: Shkoder and Tirana (Albania) and Campania (Italy). He concluded with a presentation of the future website of the Intermediterranean Commission.

The Vice Presidents of the Fez-Meknes and Oriental regions explained that they wanted to receive information for possible membership of the Intermediterranean Commission and the CPMR. **Davide Strangis** explained the procedure that needs to be followed.

To conclude, **Michel Vauzelle** thanked all the participants and the Regions present for their investment and participation. He welcomed the seriousness of the work carried out within the framework of the Intermediterranean Commission, and particularly thanked Davide Strangis, the Executive Secretary. He closed the meeting and thanked the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra Region once again for its welcome and the participants for their contributions.