



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CPMR INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION

Thursday 20 June 2019 - Marseille (South Region-FR)

### CONCLUSIONS

**Agnès Rampal**, Vice President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, Regional Councillor of the South Region, welcomed the participants and pointed out that the EU and the Mediterranean are facing numerous challenges, many of which are leading to a deterioration in relations between the various European partners and their Mediterranean counterparts. As the Mediterranean is relatively small on a global scale, the countries bordering it are interdependent and the Intermediterranean Commission aims, through the political and operational work of its member Regions, to show the path to cooperation, in synergy with the States' action.

In addition, particular attention will have to be paid to ongoing negotiations at the EU level regarding the future of cooperation and neighbourhood programmes in the Mediterranean. Renewal of the Med programme is essential to carry out joint actions, in particular through the Intermediterranean Commission. Preservation of the IEV CTF Neighbourhood Programme is also a priority, with the necessary administrative adjustments, to ensure the best possible participation of partners on the southern shore.

**Apostolos Katsifaras**, President of the Dytiki Ellada Region and President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, came back to the previous points and outlined the meeting's objectives. He pointed out that the political messages to be drawn up for this General Assembly and for its overall action plan were being prepared in a particularly sensitive context. On the one hand, geopolitically speaking, the decision by US President Donald Trump to withdraw his troops from Syria is a new destabilizing and uncertain factor for the countries of the eastern Mediterranean and the entire basin. On the other hand, in terms of resources and energy, alliances are to be welcomed in the basin's Eastern part, particularly between Egypt, Cyprus and Greece, which would represent an important strategic step forward. However, the situation in the Western Balkans, driven by social conflicts, must be addressed, as must the key role that Turkey could play in the area's stability.

Additionally, the Mediterranean Sea has the highest concentration of plastic waste in the world, which affects not only the environment but also the economy. This pollution represents an additional challenge for those in the Mediterranean who will be the most responsible for finding solutions. This cooperation will serve to strengthen the European project that has been plagued by Euro-skeptics.

**Davide Strangis**, CPMR Executive Director in charge of Programmes, Partnerships and Geographical Commissions, gave an update on the CPMR's work on the future of the European Union and the territorial agenda. He recalled that the Intermediterranean Commission is one of the CPMR's Geographical Commissions that works most directly on projects: over the period 2017-2022, the projects represent a total budget of 50 million Euros, constituting investments that benefit its members and other stakeholders.

The CPMR's participation in various groups and partnerships will be an area for further strengthening, as well as the application of the results of these collaborations.

Through its partnerships and coordination, the CPMR is working to provide a long-term vision for the new European Commission and European Parliament to develop a territorial agenda that equals the current challenges.

**Apostolos Katsifaras** concluded this first part by inviting participants to take note of the transfer of functions of Executive Secretary Davide Strangis to Élodie Nunes, who will now assume the functions of Executive Secretary for the Intermediterranean Commission.

## **THE INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2019-2020**

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**Apostolos Katsifaras**, President of the Intermediterranean Commission, and **Élodie Nunes**, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, recalled that the action plan presented last year in Patras had served as a basis for presenting updates for the current plan, in line with the CPMR strategy and adapting to the recent political and strategic framework. It outlines a vision of the Mediterranean of the future around 4 essential axes:

- 1) Macro-regional strategies of the Mediterranean;
- 2) Participation of the regions in the decision-making process regarding the migration crisis;
- 3) Development of an effective Mediterranean through joint actions;
- 4) Mediterranean citizenship and youth.

Approved by the Political Bureau in February 2019 in Barcelona, this plan was subject to amendments. The second axis has been reformulated; action on migration is based on the particular and often asymmetric skills that the different Regions possess (or not). The Intermediterranean Commission wishes to respect a certain flexibility on this subject and has therefore adapted its wording accordingly. However, actions developed on this topic will not change. In addition, an intersectional line of work related to climate change has now been added to the action plan upon proposal by the South Region.

**Agnès Rampal**, Vice President of the Intermediterranean Commission, Councillor of the South Region, recalled that the fight against climate change was absolutely essential and a priority, and the South Region was delighted that the Intermediterranean Commission was joining forces with it in this area.

**Ettayeb el-Masbahi**, Vice President of the Intermediterranean Commission, Councillor of the Oriental Region, insists that the EU's texts and regulatory frameworks remain too weak in light of the various challenges. The Southern Regions are willing to participate in this work of development and redesign.

**Catalina de Miguel García**, representative of Andalusia, Vice President of the Intermediterranean Commission, reaffirmed her full support for the actions of the Intermediterranean Commission. The Declaration of the Alliance for Cooperation, promoted in February 2019 in Barcelona, requires that the Intermediterranean Commission work towards convergence in the Mediterranean, to which future activities must contribute. In addition, Andalusia's relations with Morocco will be leveraged, particularly within the context of the WestMED strategy.

Opening the debate, **Guillaume Cros**, Vice President of the Occitanie Region, suggested moving in favour of an eco-friendly orientation, supporting the idea that, on the eve of various policy approvals and the implementation of future actions, the participating funds should be allocated as a priority according to their impact on climate change.

In addition, Occitanie deplores the amendment and mitigation of axis 2 on migration, despite the fact that it has allocated 1 million Euros for the reception of refugees despite the fact that expertise in this area is reserved to the national level in France. According to the Occitanie Region, all Regions should be involved in this subject, regardless of whether or not they have decentralised powers.

**Davide Strangis** replied on this last point by reaffirming that the reformulation of Axis 2 on migration in no way changes the actions that will be carried out in this respect and in close collaboration with the CPMR and the dedicated Task Force.

In conclusion, the overall action plan was discussed and adopted by the Intermediterranean Commission. It strongly emphasises the need for the European Union to consider the variable of mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change as part of the criteria for allocating funds.

## **FINAL DECLARATION OF THE IMC GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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The President and Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission opened the session, summarizing the process of writing the Final Declaration. This year, it is presented in a more narrative form to highlight the interdependence of all the themes.

Several amendments were submitted by the members, studied by the Secretariat of the Intermediterranean Commission and presented in session for adoption. In particular, items 7, 10, 12, 14 (addition), 19, 24, 39, 41, 45, 47, 48 (addition), 51, 54, 60, 61, 62 and 65 were discussed and all ratified. The Final Declaration was unanimously approved.

## **POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION**

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**Guillaume Huet**, Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation, South Region, gave an update on the Summit of the Two Shores, held in the following days. By mobilizing civil society actors, several preparatory forums addressed the following themes: youth, education and mobility, energy transition, economy and competitiveness, culture, media and tourism, the environment and sustainable development, and governance. The projects identified in this framework were introduced in Tunis in June 2019 and 20 of them will be presented to the various Foreign Ministers at the Summit.

The political declaration will be the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's main contribution to the Summit. This will give a regional dimension to the Summit, complementing the diplomatic action of the States.

**Élodie Nunes**, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, presented the latest news from the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance. She recalled that it was ratified by the Political Bureau of the Intermediterranean Commission in February 2019; its terms of reference have since been prepared. Expressions of interest from two networks have been received by the Secretariat of the Intermediterranean Commission as potential signatories: UNIMED and the Union of Municipalities of the Adriatic-Ionian Area.

**Guy Esclopé**, Councillor of the Occitanie Region, reiterated the wish to put the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) at the heart of the priorities. The first meeting of the "Economic and Social Cohesion" working group in Montpellier, chaired by the Lazio and Occitanie Regions, initiated the development of a political declaration draft on SSE in the Mediterranean. This Declaration should include the following messages:

- Beyond the economic, legal and cultural contexts of each country, SSE actors recognise the common values and principles that differentiate SSE from the traditional market economy: among them, the primacy of the individual over capital and local roots.
- The importance of raising awareness of the privileged role of local and regional authorities in the development of SSE and inviting the EU institutions to enhance its visibility in Europe.

The Regions of the Intermediterranean Commission are invited to participate in the draft declaration and to sign it at the CPMR General Assembly in October 2019, so that its content can be brought to the attention of European institutions, and especially to the new European parliamentarians.

**Élodie Nunes** gave a final update on the strategic policy documents from the projects in which the Intermediterranean Commission and its members are involved. Among others, PHAROS4MPAs with a specific focus on Marine Protected Areas and diving, fishing and aquaculture. The Intermediterranean Commission and its members participated in drafting the project reports on these topics.

BLUETOURED is the umbrella project of the Interreg MED sustainable tourism community, for which the Intermediterranean Commission is an associated partner. 4 factual notes have been prepared, with the final policy document expected in the autumn.

### ➤ Territorial Cooperation and Macro-Regional Strategies: contributions from the South Region and Catalonia

The group will focus on working on governance tools and modalities in the Mediterranean as well as on programmes. The WestMED initiative has also developed well under the Franco-Algerian presidency in 2018 and Franco-Moroccan in 2019.

Concerning the Neighbourhood, about forty projects will be financed out of the 430 submitted within the framework of the IEV CTF Med first call for projects. 3 of these projects concern the Intermediterranean Commission as an associated partner. The second call for IEV programme strategic projects will be followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> call in 2020.

For the Interreg Med programme, a call launched at the end of 2018 should see a number of projects selected in autumn 2019. The call for strategic projects launched in the spring concerns maritime surveillance and sustainable tourism; this latter topic is of interest to the IMC, which has positioned itself on two project proposals.

The PANORAMED (Interreg Med) project will aim to improve the transfer of project results to public policies; a conference in Brussels will be organised in October for this purpose. The Catalan initiative has provided the opportunity to obtain insight from experts and various stakeholders to assess the prospects for development of an integrated strategy in the Mediterranean. The key ideas to remember are: (1) the importance of regional cooperation networks, the reality of which must be better considered by multi-level governance instruments; (2) the need to build more partnerships beyond mere funding, in particular by opening up South of the basin; (3) the need for the Alliance for Cooperation in the Mediterranean involving the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, the Mediterranean Regions, the Latin Arc, MedCities, the Adriatic-Ionian initiative, and other key actors that may be involved in the future.

### ➤ Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy: contributions from Murcia and South Region

The main topics on which the Working Group wishes to continue to work are (1) the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), assistance mechanisms (EIM), transport corridors and the link with the Motorways of the Sea; (2) sustainable maritime transport, air transport, multi-modal freight logistics; (3) and periphery and accessibility.

In addition, with regard to the future of TEN-T, the criteria for its implementation must also be reviewed with interest and care, in order to strengthen the IMC's position as lobbyist to European institutions.

### ➤ Economic and Social Cohesion: contributions from the Occitanie and Lazio Regions

At the heart of the current priorities are the themes of (1) youth and mobility; (2) sustainable tourism; (3) and Mediterranean citizenship.

The priority will be to determine the positions that the Mediterranean Regions will take on common Social and Solidarity Economy strategies, whose legislative instruments should be affirmed and harmonised. In addition, synergies will be created to facilitate the securing of SSE funding. One of the projects related to SSE would be setting up an Erasmus for young entrepreneurs. In addition, the November 2019 international social innovation meetings in Montpellier will be an important event.

Actions in favour of youth and citizenship are also envisaged to respond to the challenge of unemployment and improve understanding between the North and South (promoting intercultural relations, for example). To bring the two shores closer together, the 2019-2020 strategy will build on the Erasmus+ programme to deepen the theme of federalism. The Lazio Region organises annual forums open to young people on precisely the themes of the history of federalism. This year, they will be offered the opportunity to participate in a pilot project at an international seminar in partnership with the Spinelli Institute.

With regard to the promotion of a common identity, the working group will work towards Euro-Mediterranean cooperation that will consider the real needs of the population through closer partnerships with young Mediterranean people, thereby strengthening Mediterranean citizenship.

➤ Water and Energy: contributions from the Generalitat Valenciana and Rabat-Salé-Kénitra Region

With regard to energy, the SHERPA project (Interreg Med), for which the Intermediterranean Commission is a partner, specifically aims to draw up a joint action plan for the renovation of public buildings in the Mediterranean. In this regard, the Rabat-Salé Kénitra Region is working to ensure that this project is in harmony with Morocco's national energy strategy. This strategy would thus include support for the development of energy efficiency in administrative buildings (this plan would target 114 local authority buildings and 100 decentralised buildings with a budget of 10 million MAD allocated by the region).

The Intermediterranean Commission has set up a Task Force on energy renovation in buildings within this working group that will allow for the dissemination of the SHERPA project results and experiences across the Mediterranean. Under the aegis of the IEV CTF Med programme, the Intermediterranean Commission is participating in the submission of another project so that the SHERPA project's guidelines can be extended to other Mediterranean countries, since, unlike the IEV CTF Med, Interreg Med does not affect the southern Mediterranean countries.

Concerning the water issue, the objective of the working group will remain the same as before, namely to work to address the challenges related to water management in the Mediterranean, monitor the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, ensure an increased presence of the Intermediterranean Commission in water discussion forums, encourage the exchange of good practices and maintain links between water and energy in the context of climate change and among working groups.

After revision and presentation of the next directions of the work plans, they are approved by the General Assembly of the Intermediterranean Commission. Final versions will be distributed in advance of the October 2019 Intermediterranean Commission plenary session in Palermo.

## **INTERNAL QUESTIONS**

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**Davide Strangis**, Executive Director of the CPMR, gave an update on the financial report and membership. He pointed out that, in general, the projects had made it possible to strengthen Intermediterranean Commission activities and impacts and increase the number of staff. The Intermediterranean Commission's accounting balance sheet is positive and amounts to 147,000 Euros, thus multiplying the IMC's budget by a factor of 2.

For the end of 2019, the Intermediterranean Commission budget forecast is nevertheless negative, with a deficit of 24,000 Euros, as well as a deficit of 123,000 Euros in 2020. This is due to the fact that some projects for which the Intermediterranean Commission is a partner will end in autumn 2019 and that the Intermediterranean Commission will therefore await the approval of new projects.

In addition, new ongoing projects with which the Intermediterranean Commission is involved are COEVOL4BG, MEDPEARLS and MEDUSA (within the IEV CTF MED). The IMC participated in the submission of 10 proposals related to sustainable tourism, integrated coastal zone management, water management, blue quarries and energy efficiency in buildings, all of which are under evaluation (7 of them were submitted under the Interreg Med programme's third call for projects, 2 under axis 4 of the Interreg Med governance and 1 under the EMFF).

Davide Strangis also shared information **on the process of defining the CPMR Strategic Plan and synergies among the Geographical Commissions**. Implementing the decision of the June 2019 Political Bureau meeting in Donegal, the CPMR General Assembly's final declaration will be replaced this year by a Manifesto. This document will reflect a longer-term vision and highlight the importance of territories in Europe.

With regard to synergies among the Geographical Commissions, the Intermediterranean Commission should strengthen its connections with the Islands Commission, an already initiated process, in particular through cooperation projects, as well as with the Balkan-Black Sea Commission and neighbouring countries. Neighbourhood will also become a relevant dimension for the North Sea Commission when Brexit takes effect; the CPMR will have to work towards strong links between its commissions and this new geopolitical order configuration.

**Apostolos Katsifaras** also announced that, following elections in Greece, he will have to resign as President of the Intermediterranean Commission. He specified that the Western Greece Region would nevertheless remain available to support management of the Intermediterranean Commission Secretariat in the appointment of the next Presidency, if necessary, with a view to the October 2019 plenary session in Palermo.

**Apostolos Katsifaras**, President of the Intermediterranean Commission, and **Élodie Nunes**, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, expressed thanks for contributions and encourage ever more successful work. The meeting is adjourned.

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