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# Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean Regions

## - A Political Agenda

### for the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Regions -

#### I. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

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This document constitutes the **political agenda of the Mediterranean Regions** involved in the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission for the **promotion of sustainable tourism at Euro-Mediterranean** level. It is meant as a guide for their own joint present and future actions, valorising their specific experience, and includes also messages to the EU and Euro-Mediterranean Institutions.

In this sense, the agenda is also conceived as a **contribution to the existing policies and overarching initiatives, works or cooperation frameworks at European and Mediterranean level** that address this strategic theme among their main objectives or priority action lines. In particular: the European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism, the works of the Union for the Mediterranean on Blue Economy, the [BLUEMED](#) initiative on Research and Innovation in the Blue Growth, the West MED maritime initiative, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), the Bologna Charter for the sustainable development of Mediterranean Coasts, the Interreg MED community on [Sustainable Tourism](#) and the [PANORAMED](#) Working Group on Maritime and Coastal Tourism.

Moreover, it is to note that this agenda is **based on the policies and concrete works of the regions** concerning tourism development as well as on several experiences of collaboration developed in the frame of the **CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Task Force on “Sustainable Tourism and Culture”**. In this framework, it takes stock of the promising **results of a series of EU cooperation projects** that can have an impact at EU or Mediterranean basin scale.

The agenda also encompasses and intends to **further promote a series of excellent multilevel relations already activated with a series of EU and Mediterranean networks**, such as NECSTouR, MedCities, Arco Latino, Plan Bleu and UNIMED among others, towards even more solid synergies for sustainable tourism development.

#### II. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS: THE JOINT AGENDA

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The Regions of the Intermediterranean Commission gathered in its Political Bureau in Cartagena (Murcia) on the 15 February 2018 and in its General Assembly in Patras (Western Greece) on the 28/29 June 2018, agreed on the following political messages concerning their efforts to jointly promote sustainable tourism at European and Mediterranean level.

The CPMR **Intermediterranean Commission** and its Regions,

**Recognise that:**

1. Tourism is the largest maritime activity in Europe - which is the number one destination of the world - and employs more than 3.2 million people, generating billions in GDP and representing over one third of the maritime economy, being also one of the greatest economic drivers in the Mediterranean.
2. Based on the data provided by the UNWTO, Europe - led by Mediterranean destinations - recorded extraordinary results in 2017, with 8% more international arrivals than in 2016 (671 million in total). Growth was driven by the extraordinary results in Southern and Mediterranean Europe (+13%).
3. The sector has a very relevant dimension at global and wider Mediterranean scale with ongoing expansion trends, but bears important issues and challenges concerning the concurrent (and often conflictual) uses of coastal and marine resources. In this sense, the basin is especially concerned by a large range of socio-economic pressures in addition to the ones arising from climate change. Besides, tourism accounts for 8% of human emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change (source: *Nature climate change* 7 May 2018). In addition, tourism in the Mediterranean, and in certain countries in particular, has been paying the effects of the terrorism threats.
4. Within the wider Blue Growth domain, this requires integrated approaches, based on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Maritime Spatial Planning (ICZM-MSP) and Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) principles, as addressed in the EC Communication on coastal and maritime tourism and in the pool of existing tools and policies dealing with planning, management and governance of coastal and marine areas (e.g. environmental protection, regional development, climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, economic sectors of the blue economy).
5. Blue Economy is a strategic sector for Europe but it is also at the core of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Declaration signed in November 2015, which refers to Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management as cross-sectorial governance/policy tools and refers to tourism as a key economic sector for the entire Mediterranean region.
6. For the future:
  - According to the World Tourism and Travel Council, more than 5 million new jobs linked to tourism could be created in the EU over the next 10 years, 20% of which would go to young people under 25. Therefore, Tourism can represent a way to combat youth unemployment, in particular in the Mediterranean where the unemployment rates are very high.
  - The number of international tourists will probably double in the EU between now and 2030, with an increasing percentage of tourists coming from emerging new classes with high spending power, half of which from Asia.
  - Europe and the Mediterranean with their landscape, nature and cultural heritage, can attract a very high part of this new demand. However, they must try to combine the promotion of its attractiveness with the sustainability aspects connected to the environmental protection.

**Consider that:**

7. Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean must entail a multidimensional concept able to include and 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, and the culture and (material and immaterial) heritage aspects, which are assets for the tourist attractiveness of the *Mare Nostrum*.
8. Public Administrations of all levels have the possibility and the responsibility to play a significant role towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of their territories, favouring a harmonic co-evolution of human activities and natural systems processes. This has been repeatedly demonstrated in the frame of regional policies for the promotion of sustainable tourism, or even political initiatives and projects involving regions, local authorities and the academia, that have been backed also from several Mediterranean States.

9. Social acceptance is essential to ensure the smooth development and sustainability of tourism in Mediterranean destinations. A big part of Mediterranean touristic areas are affected by mass tourism, which can sometimes be a problem for residents as it often damages their life conditions and has a negative impact on the environment. Adequate solutions must be developed to ensure a harmonious coexistence between tourists and residents.

10. The focus of the joint actions of the Mediterranean regions should be put on:

- How to better stimulate performance and competitiveness through season elongation, public-private collaboration, promotion of skills in the tourism sector, encouraging solutions based on research and development.
- The improvement of knowledge concerning the tourism sector, facing lack, comparability and interoperability of data concerning tourism at different territorial scales and producing innovative Decision Support Systems (DSS) able to foster a more informed Policy making and better understanding the limits of the tourist carrying capacities of the regions at tourist destination level.
- Strengthening the sustainability and culture aspects of the tourism sector using – at the same time - the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning as well as promoting eco-tourism, cultural itineraries, or the protection, promotion and management of the cultural material and immaterial heritage of the Mediterranean. Combining in a way element of planning, adaptation to climate change, anthropogenic pressures and the improvement of the attractiveness.
- The mainstreaming of sustainable tourism in the emerging strategies and initiatives or framework of cooperation at Euro-Mediterranean scale.
- A transversal attention to the dynamics concerning sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean Islands, which face specific issues concerning waste, water management during the high seasons, as well as accessibility, mobility and energy issues.

11. The long-term competitiveness and sustainability of tourism in Europe and the Mediterranean must be ensured fully exploiting innovation in the sector and ICT, including bookings to become more customer-oriented.

**Fully support:**

12. The [Declaration](#) of Intents of the Interreg MED Community on Sustainable Tourism - Athens September 2017 - that aims at contributing to address tourism pressures, enhancing attractiveness and tourism offer in the Mediterranean region as well as strengthening planning and management practices towards sustainable tourism, building a strong community of projects and stakeholders.

13. The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, which constitutes an opportunity for celebrations but also for concrete action towards sustainable cultural tourism and intercultural dialogue in Europe and the Mediterranean.

In this framework, the Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions **will**:

14. Continue to develop and support the activities of the projects dealing with sustainable tourism where they are actively involved as partner or associated partner: [MITOMED+](#), [CO-EVOLVE](#), [BleuTourMed](#), [HERIT-DATA](#) (all funded by Interreg MED), [Med Coasts for Blue Growth](#) (labelled by the UfM), [CIVITAS DESTINATIONS](#) (funded by H2020).

15. Keep taking stock of the results of past projects such as [Com&Cap MarInA-Med](#), [Tourmedassets](#), [NEMO](#), [MITOMED](#) (funded by Interreg MED), among others from other territorial or thematic cooperation programmes, such as EN(P)I CBC MED or COSME, even from other geographical basins.

16. Keep playing an active role in and boosting synergies with the Interreg MED community on Sustainable Tourism, which is about to launch its capitalising phase aiming to translate modular projects' results and best practices into concrete messages so as to influence policy makers.

17. Help strengthening the interactions and the reflections linking Sustainable Tourism development and Biodiversity Protection, taking stock of the works undergoing in the framework of the Interreg MED

Biodiversity Community aimed at streamlining the networking and management efforts in Mediterranean Protected Areas (PAs) as a mechanism to enhance nature conservation and protection in the region.

18. Foster capitalisation, extension and replication of relevant experiences, results and tools at a wider Mediterranean scale. For instance, and as a priority, the ones being produced by:

- CO-EVOLVE: the detailed analysis of “threats and enabling factors” for coastal and maritime sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean (Climate Change, morphological stability, erosion, coastal risks, urbanisation, touristic fluxes and carrying capacity, pollution and other pressures on the ecosystems, conflict of uses between land and sea), as well as the coastal protection measures, water cycles and depuration, transport and accessibility, ecosystems protection measures, governance, resources & mechanisms; the “tourism sustainability toolkit” or the “planning toolkit” for sustainable tourism destinations, which is based on participatory methodologies and in tackling the specificities of pilot areas; and the pilot actions being implemented in all the pilot areas (see CO-EVOLVE’s [Deliverable Library](#)).
- MITOMED+: the “Green beach model” and the [online open platform](#) tool to benchmark the evolution of the sustainability performance of touristic destinations, through the use of a set of indicators and a “Decision Supporting System”, or the “Integrated management model of Mediterranean maritime and coastal tourism” that will be produced at the end of the project (see MITOMED+’s [Deliverable Library](#)).
- HERIT DATA: the joint integrated planning measures based on innovation and open data that will be produced for old-historical city centres and sites of particular cultural or archaeological interest that can benefit and be affected at the same time by mass tourism (sun, beach, cruises).
- CIVITAS DESTINATIONS: the set of innovative actions for sustainable mobility measures that offer intelligent sustainable transport solutions for tourists and residents through innovation and cooperation with all major stakeholders. These solutions aim to improve urban accessibility, the cost effectiveness and integration of transport services and to reduce emissions and energy consumption.
- ALTER ECO: the “Model for implementation of innovative tourism strategies” to be tested in 4 cities and 2 regions so as to reduce and better manage the impact of tourism activities on the environment by promoting Mediterranean Identity, as well as the “International learning Portfolio backed by Good Practices Database” (see Deliverable Library on ALTER ECO’s [website](#)).

19. Develop more synergies at technical and political level among the strategies for sustainable tourism promotion of the Mediterranean regions, engaging in exchanges of best practices, and peer to peer learning.

20. Keep strengthening the relations and promote new alliances, workshops, conferences and debates on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean with important networks such as NECSTouR, Arco Latino, UNIMED or MedCities, among others.

21. Associate the [SEARICA](#) Intergroup of the European Parliament to sustainable tourism activities and debates concerning the Mediterranean (e.g. organising an event in the frame of the MITOMED+ project with NECSTouR by the end of 2018).

22. Contribute to the projects’ results collection, as well as the global reflections, gap and opportunity analysis of PANORAMED Working Group on Sustainable and Maritime Tourism, starting from the sessions on sustainable coastal and maritime tourism, organised in the framework of the Political Bureau of the IMC in Cartagena on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2018.

23. Do their best to identify actions that can contribute to implement the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of BLUEMED, the Frame for Actions of West MED or the Action Plan of the EUSAIR.

24. Convey their efforts on the improvement of the skills, education and mobility of youth in the sustainable tourism and culture sector.

25. Develop further actions, also through projects, in order to fight illegal and non-responsible mass tourism practices, better understand and improve their tourist carrying capacities diffusing on the territory and to promote:

- Deseasonalisation, diversification and promotion of local economies and tourism products;
- Sustainable fishing tourism, sea food tourism, eco-tourism, natural, underwater, cultural and adventure tourism practices, products and itineraries (GreenWays, EuroVelo etc.);
- Tourism policies and measures based on multilevel governance, innovation and an integrated territorial approach, putting the sustainability element at the core.

26. Work to reduce the impact of the tourism sector on climate change, including by promoting low-carbon modes of transport, with a view to a probable doubling of the number of international tourists in the EU by 2030, and in order to limit the consequences of climate change which may particularly affect the attractiveness of the Mediterranean territories.

On this base the Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions also **ask the EU institutions to:**

27. Strengthen the shift towards a sustainable, innovative and digital tourism sector at policy and infrastructure level with a special attention to the Mediterranean.

28. Dedicate a specific budget line for tourism in the new Multiannual Financial Framework, in order to move towards a genuine European tourism policy capable of unleashing the potential of the “quadruple helix” and exploiting the potential of the regional and local authorities for the sustainable tourism promotion, together with the States and the EU Institutions, in a multilevel governance model.

29. Put a specific attention and resources on the training, education and mobility of youth in the tourism and culture sector, with actions and funds that should be conceived in a complementary way with other existing cultural and inter-cultural initiatives.

30. Preserve the budget for EU territorial cooperation in the post-2020 period, letting enough room to the Mediterranean programs to reflect upon the possibility to allocate more resources and efforts - based on the needs of the involved territories - for projects dealing with sustainable tourism in maritime and coastal areas and/or culture tourism, including both material and immaterial heritage.

### **III. MONITORING AND FUTURE UPDATE OF THE AGENDA**

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The Agenda will be monitored, updated and adapted on an “ad hoc” basis at the initiative of the Intermediterranean Commission and its Task Force on “Sustainable and Cultural Tourism”.

The update will be taking stock of the development in the regional policies on tourism of the regions, the running projects (2018-2021) and the contribution and interactions with external partner, networks and initiatives.