INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION
Global Report
2020-2022 Mandate
Recalling the three main strands of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission’s Presidency

"The relaunch of the blue economy sector, sustainability, and cohesion in the Mediterranean represents our priorities to be pursued through partnerships and cooperation alliances, as well as the mobilization of the Mediterranean Youth as a key enabler for the present and future of Mediterranean integration."

Nello Musumeci, President of Regione Sicilia

Blue economy, sustainability, and cohesion in the Mediterranean

In the framework of the environmental transition, we are currently living, the impacts of climate change we are facing - and considering the objectives promoted by the international and European fora such as the European Green Deal, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic crisis, cooperation and mutual understanding between the Mediterranean Regions have become imperatives for ensuring sound management of goods and services for development, sustainability and cohesion in the Mediterranean territories. For this purpose, the IMC has worked on several projects on blue economy (e.g., Blue Growth Community, etc.), biodiversity protection (Biodiversity Protection Community), sustainable tourism (e.g., PANORAMED, WINTERMED, BESTMED & SMARTMED, etc.), water management (SolaQua), developing synergies with the Mediterranean actors, such as the UfM, following the MedCoopAlliance working activities, the WestMED and BLUEMED initiatives.

Mobilizing the Mediterranean Youth Council

The “Intermediterranean Commission Youth Council” was created at the end of 2019, on the initiative of Regione Lazio. Its main aim is to transmit the vision of the youth on current issues such as the environment, employment, and equality (among others) to the highest political level and foster collaboration with policymakers at all levels. Working in better synergy with young people within our network would contribute to increasing their interest in issues related to the Mediterranean basin, while ensuring a process of democratic participation within the Mediterranean and European networks. Over the current mandate, the activities of the Mediterranean Youth Council have been better defined - are still in definition - while they have regularly contributed to relevant IMC meetings.

Projects, Alliances, & Partnerships to speed up the shift toward sustainable economies

The IMC, through its working groups led by its Regions and the proper involvement of its Secretariat, has achieved great results by implementing and supporting projects in the blue economy, sustainable tourism, renewable energies, migration and education, building capacity in the Mediterranean area and contributing to the reduction of disparities among its territories. For this reason, the IMC over this mandate has kept participating in the projects as a partner or associate, contributing to the advocacy activity of the organization, and having a positive impact on the membership (policy papers, technical project results to capitalize, etc.). Concretely, they nourish the network’s key thematic axes while contributing to fulfilling its biannual and working groups’ action plans, in full coordination with CPMR global priorities. With this logic, the IMC constitutes a platform of exchange for its members to build partnerships in fields of interest and enhanced cooperation experience in the basin.
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The Intermediterranean Commission (IMC) is one of the 6 Geographical Commissions of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR). It has been active as think tank, group of interest and platform for technical and political cooperation since 1990 and gathers more than 40 Regions of 9 Mediterranean Countries (Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia). The IMC enjoys strong ties with many other subnational administrations and public and private actors, universities and centers of research, institutions and organizations all over the Mediterranean basin through its various kinds of activities. Its internal structure foresees a General Assembly, a Political Bureau, different thematic Working Groups and a Secretariat that supports and jointly coordinates the functioning of the overall activities, linking with the global action at CPMR level.

The biannual 2020-2022 CPMR Intermediterranean Commission political mandate started in October 2020 with the election of the new IMC Political Bureau and the election of IMC President, Mr. Nello Musumeci, President of the Region Sicilia (Italy), following the interim mandate of the Région Occitanie. The elections during the IMC General Assembly in October 2020 were held online due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic crisis resulting from the spread of the SARS-CoV-2. The General Assembly replaced the face-to-face meeting initially previewed in May 2020 in Seville. In addition, the four new Vice-Presidencies of the Intermediterranean Commission were designated and validated by the Assembly: Mr. Juan Manuel Moreno, President of the Junta of Andalusia, Mrs. Magali Altounian, Regional Councillor at Région Sud, Mr. Fokion Zaimis, Deputy Regional Governor of Dytiki Ellada Region (Western Greece), and Mr. Ettayeb Masbahi, Vice-President of the Regional Council of l’Oriental Region.

The 2020-2022 mandate was an intense period of activities, having to deal mainly with the socio-economic consequences of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic crisis in Europe and in the Mediterranean context – especially within the tourism sector, as highlighted by the IMC 2020 Final Declaration. The urgent need to address the environmental and digital transition and develop sustainable models of economies has oriented the way for our activities that have been focused on fulfilling global agendas as the UN 2030 Agenda & Sustainable Development Goals, Next Generation EU, the EU Green Deal, and the Communication for a revised EU Neighborhood policy. Debates about the Mediterranean macro-regional strategy have kept going on, as the time seemed even more appropriate to adopt coordinated actions to recover from the pandemic and deal with common challenges. Coupled to this is the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia at the beginning of 2022, which will have complex socio-economic and geo-political consequences, including in the Mediterranean. Beyond these challenges, the activities developed within the mandate 2020-2022 worked toward a better integration, solidarity and joint actions for the Mediterranean, including more proactivity to work together with the Mediterranean Youth.

With this in mind, the action of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission – through its advocacy activity and concrete projects – has strongly enlightened the added value that regions can bring to sustainable development, territories, their citizens and youth, and generally speaking to
cooperation in the Mediterranean. During the mandate, the IMC also fruitfully contributed to the global CPMR works on the future of Europe and negotiations thereof, cohesion, maritime, as well as accessibility issues, among other policy areas.

PART I: INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE IMC

Global Action plan and priorities 2020-2022

The Mediterranean basin is a large and complex area, with unique features in terms of geographical variety and a past that makes it the cradle of the Western civilization. Since ages, the countries on its shores see the Mediterranean Sea as a way of communication, interconnection, trade and cooperation. In this context, the Intermediterranean Commission plays an active, substantial and leading role in the wider region, promoting focus and convergence to the Med area through active political dialogue, concrete actions, programmes and synergies in all sectors.

Over the past two years, the IMC, with its Presidency ensured by the President of Region Sicilia, Mr. Nello Musumeci, has worked through three transversal themes, in coherence and continuity with its guiding orientations since 2017, but also according to the current worldwide situation induced by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the specific European and Mediterranean needs thereof.

These three transversal themes have supported the definition and implementation of the IMC action plan, outlining a global framework to the more specific sectoral action of the IMC's Working Groups:

❖ Boosting the blue economy, sustainability and cohesion in the Mediterranean Sea to realize a change of paradigm for the future of the area, while encouraging the emergence of sea-basin and macro-regional strategies.
❖ Mobilizing the Mediterranean Youth as a key enabler for the present and future of the basin by further developing the activities of the Intermediterranean Commission Youth Council. This would allow to raise awareness on key Mediterranean issues, promote intercultural understanding, citizenship and the common values we all share, namely peace, justice, solidarity, cohesion, sustainability and prosperity.
❖ Operationalizing the shift towards sustainable economies through a project-based cooperation in the basin, consolidating alliances and involvement in concrete actions and solid partnerships.

IMC Working Groups and Task Forces

As per its various interests, the IMC kept developing its activities through the following setting:

❖ Territorial Cooperation & Macro-regional strategies, counting on the co-presidencies of Catalonia & Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, see specific Action Plan. This working group encompasses the “Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance” (Catalonia) task force.
❖ Transport & Integrated Maritime Policy, counting on the co-presidencies of the Region of Murcia & Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, see specific Action Plan. This working group encompasses the “Coordination Board of the Bologna Charter” (Emilia-Romagna), and “Follow-up of in the Regions of the Union for the Mediterranean Blue Economy Agenda” (Lazio) task forces.
PART II: MAIN POLICY ADVANCEMENTS

2020 General Assembly: Working towards a sustainable recovery of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean

Due to the challenges linked to the worldwide sanitary situation, the General Assembly initially planned for May 2020 in Sevilla – which had to celebrate the IMC’s 30th anniversary – was postponed to the 26th of October 2020 and replaced by an online meeting. During this session, the IMC new Political Bureau and the new President, Mr. Nello Musumeci were elected. Discussions focused mainly on the impacts of the pandemic in the Mediterranean, the recovery measures and consequences notably for the tourism sector, and the importance of the solidarity approach as underlined by the statement of the MedCoopAlliance (April 2020). The IMC actually developed a study outlining the impacts of COVID-19 and of the adaptation measures on the tourism sector. Over the dedicated session, representatives from the European Commission and Parliament – respectively Ms. Anna Athanasopoulou (DG GROW) and Ms. Josianne Cutajar (MEP, TRAN Committee, SEARICA Intergroup) also participated. As the outcome of the thematic session, the IMC 2020 Final Declaration on Sustainable Tourism has been approved. Its aim was notably to contribute to the current debates on the socioeconomic and environmental recovery of the sector for the EU and the Med basin, and to promote the role of Regions in the socio-economic revival of the Mediterranean tourism sector. The positions adopted within the Assembly were in continuity with the previous Declarations of the Intermediterranean Commission (Barcelona 2013, Patras 2014, Venice 2014, Marseilles 2014, Nafplio and Rabat 2015, Venice 2016, Barcelona 2017, Naples 2017, Patras 2018, Marseilles 2019) and built on the implementation of the Political Agenda “Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean Regions.” This IMC 2020 Final Declaration also fuelled the debates and outcomes of the IMC Plenary and CPMR General Assembly held online in October 2020.
On the 1st of March 2021, the IMC celebrated its Political Bureau online, counting with a high number of participants involved in a productive discussion around key issues for the Mediterranean basin. Indeed, in response to the European Commission’s Communication on a Renewed partnership for Southern Neighborhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean – published some days earlier in February 2021, the IMC presented a position paper highlighting key issues, such as the promotion of multi-level governance, macro-regional strategies, and the integration of the basin, as well as the role of networks such as the MedCoopAlliance in supporting the landing of public policies and funds on the territories.

Then, the discussion focused on the thematic report “Agriculture and Food Security in the context of Climate Change in the Mediterranean” adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) during their 12th plenary session in February 2021. This report, coordinated by Agnès Rampal (Region Sud) presents the impacts of climate change on the Mediterranean agri-food chain and the actions that can be put into practice through territorial cooperation to overcome them.

Following this report, the IMC launched the AGRIMED Task Force under the coordination of Region Sud to work towards the implementation of the report’s recommendations. For example, actions encompass the elaboration of an observatory and a specific label for the Mediterranean diet, by capitalizing on past similar experiences while further developing synergies with other regional experiences. Finally, updates on working groups’ activities and projects have followed, such as the eventual creation of an axis of Mediterranean lagoons restoration in the framework of the Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy Working Group and the participation of the IMC Youth Council in international fora on the topics of youth engagement and climate action among others.

Following the first meeting of the AGRIMED Task Force, held online on the 6th of July 2021, the Intermediterranean Commission met online at occasion of its General Assembly on the 9th of July 2021. Priority issues identified in the previous Political Bureau (March 2021) we discussed, namely governance, climate change and biodiversity protection, global sustainability, blue economy and the Youth. On the 17th of May 2021, the European Commission published a communication on the new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU “Transforming the EU’s Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future,” which is calling for a transition from blue growth to a sustainable blue economy model. Indeed, blue economy represents a key sector especially for Mediterranean territories and at this occasion, the
IMC had the opportunity to listen to the communication’s presentation offered by Deputy Head of Unit Isabelle Viallon (DG MARE), and comment on it. Furthermore, the IMC also reflected with the Union for the Mediterranean Deputy Secretary General Isidro González, on the communication on a Renewed partnership for Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean while linking with the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy. For this purpose, the IMC position paper drafted in reaction to the European Commission’s communication on the new Agenda for the Mediterranean and presented during the Political Bureau in March 2021 was finally endorsed. Moreover, in order to disseminate and publicly recognize the best practices in the fields included in the New Agenda for the Mediterranean, the 1st Edition of the Mediterranean Awards organized by Andalusia was presented and launched. The reflections fostered during this meeting nourished the production of the IMC 2021 Final Declaration which, by addressing the current challenges, remarks the role of local and regional authorities and wraps up the IMC members’ conclusions in 15 key recommendations for the Future of the Mediterranean basin in a post-pandemic era.

2021 Plenary Meeting: Supporting the implementation of a sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean

Back-to-back the COP26 (Glasgow, 31 October-12 November), on the 27th of October 2021 the IMC Plenary Meeting took place online. It built on the conclusions of the CPMR General Assembly, celebrated online on the 14th of October 2021 which adopted the CPMR 2021 Final Declaration calling for actions towards urgent issues: a stronger economy, justice and jobs, climate change and the environment, and migration. In particular, the IMC Plenary meeting addressed the theme of sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean and the BlueBioMed Call for Action, intended to accelerate the transition toward sustainable development of bio economy.

In addition, in reaction to the communication on the new approach for a sustainable blue economy, issued by the European Commission in May 2021, the Interreg MED Programme’s Blue Growth Community position paper, endorsed during the 2nd Annual Assembly of the Blue Growth Community held online on October 12, 13 2021, was presented. The position paper in considering the effects of both the pandemic and climate change, focuses on key areas such as circular blue economy, maritime spatial planning, research and innovation, blue investments, blue skills, maritime security, territorial cooperation, biodiversity and nature preservation, waste prevention, renewable energies. It was endorsed by the IMC as well. The meeting ended with an update on the working groups’ latest advancements, such as the drafting of a project under the Horizon Europe programme for the restoration of lagoons in the Mediterranean.
2022 Political Bureau: Moving towards a Mediterranean macroregional strategy

At the margin of the One Ocean Summit, hosted by France in Brest from February 9 to 12, 2022, the IMC met online on the 9th of February 2022, to celebrate its Political Bureau.

Central to the debate was the promotion of a macroregional strategy in the Mediterranean, while underlining two main key initiatives. First, the ongoing activities of the MedCoopAlliance in fostering cohesion within the Mediterranean basin, that envisioned participating in some ETC projects to strengthen their visions across the basin. For this purpose, the participants recalled the launch of the new Interreg Euro-MED programming period 2021-2027, presented with a hybrid event online and in Lisbon on the 2nd of December 2021. Furthermore, as underlined by the contributions offered by the Member Regions’, other sectors would benefit from the creation of a macroregional strategy, in particular for the advancements in the twin transition, the engagement with youngsters through the building of the Mediterranean Youth Council, the management of tourism, and biodiversity protection. The debate kept on discussing the fight against climate change and its impacts on the oceans and seas. In convergence with the reflections of the CPMR on further actions tackling marine litter, the Intermediterranean Commission, along with Région Sud and the IUCN, launched a call for the building of concrete projects to tackle plastic pollution in the Mediterranean Sea, aiming at further collaborating with regions on the matter.

A key step in the activities of this Political Bureau was also the endorsement of the WINTERMED Project Policy document, which advocates for a collective commitment of tourism stakeholders towards a transnational year-round tourism strategy for the Mediterranean Islands. Concretely, it intends to serve as policy advice to regional and national governments with the aim to share principles, tools, and initiatives for the extension of the tourism season, fostering its replication at the European decision-making level.

The meeting, then, concluded with updates on the working groups’ activities and projects, such as the ReNPlace proposal under the Horizon Europe programme, which aims at developing and implementing innovative governance solutions at different levels for the recovery of polluted lagoons across Europe. All the reflections elaborated during the IMC Political Bureau nourished the CPMR Political Bureau discussions (March 2022, Barcelona), organized back-to-back the MedCatDays 2022 event.
During this mandate, several actions were carried out by the Intermediterranean Commission to support and promote the sustainable, inclusive, and smart socio-economic development of the Mediterranean mostly in the policy framework of the global IMC action plan and the IMC Working Groups.

Great efforts have been made also in order to increase the involvement of the organization and the member regions in EU and international cooperation projects which are fully integrated in the IMC global action plan and serve the purpose of implementing several action lines of its working groups with the support of the IMC Secretariat.

All the ongoing projects in which the IMC participates as a full or associated partner directly involve 15 IMC member Regions together with dozens of other European, Mediterranean, national and territorial key players (e.g., universities, centres of research, institutes, NGOs, local authorities, thematic networks, national authorities, etc.). All the member regions can benefit from these projects through the participation of the IMC, which supports them in canalizing their actions. Through the projects, members can effectively interact, consolidate networks and exploit all connections to feed their political and technical reflections and policy action on the ground, at EU and Mediterranean levels alike, and on various themes of interest.

The IMC participates as a full or associated partner only in projects that are of strategic relevance regarding its biannual global action plan and the action plans of its working groups, also in accordance with the CPMR global management and financial capacity. In addition to this, the IMC provides support to its members to build partnerships in other fields of interest. For instance, over a hundred of “partners searches” were circulated among its members and external partners since 2015 in relation to different calls/programmes and opportunities.

These projects concern mainly: sustainable tourism, coastal management, and maritime spatial planning, conservation, blue growth and innovation, biodiversity protection, sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, and water management. The higher co-funder of the projects where the IMC is directly involved is the Interreg MED programme. In this sense, IMC Secretariat staff and many regions were involved directly in all the community events launched by the programme during the mandate (e.g., Rome 2018, Athens 2019, and soon “online” 2020).

At the budget level, these projects combined represent a total budget of around €55 million for the involved partners. Concerning the projects in which the IMC participates as a full partner, all the total budgets combined amount to around €40 million over the 2017-2022 period, including around €1,5 million to be managed directly by the organization.
Territorial Cooperation and Macro-Regional Strategies

The Working Group represents the general interest of Mediterranean Regions in governance, with a focus on the role of territorial organizations, authorities, and stakeholders in territorial cooperation.

Concretely, through this working group, the IMC members are advocating the promotion, monitoring, and the support of a **macro-regional and sea-basin strategic approach in the Mediterranean**, as highlighted by the **roadmap for a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy issued in 2014**. Over the past years, this roadmap has been partially implemented through the strategies and initiatives in the Mediterranean, such as **EUSAIR** and **West MED**, and the interactions with the projects, programs of cooperation that contribute to better governance, such as the Interreg Med project **PANORAMED**.

In particular, the latter is a governance platform that supports the process of strengthening and developing **multilateral cooperation frameworks in the Mediterranean region**, which has been launched in September 2017 and recently closed in April 2022, on which the IMC will capitalize in the future.

The reflections developed within this WG and in collaboration with the CPMR, have also been translated through the IMC’s relations and synergies with the main organizations, institutions, and networks existing at Euro-Mediterranean level too (EESC, CoR, COTER, ARLEM, Union for the Mediterranean, DG REGIO/MARE, MedCities, UNIMED, Arco Latino, etc.), while monitoring the discussions about the definition of the next territorial cooperation programs of the Mediterranean (Interreg Euro-MED, ENI CBC MED among others). Currently ongoing is the building of a proposal for a project under the first **Interreg Euro-MED call on governance projects**, which is intended to foster a better cooperation governance.

In the framework of promoting an integrated strategy of the Mediterranean Regions towards the European Institutions and national organizations, the institution of the **Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance** has been a key step. This multilateral platform, which supports the multi-level governance for transnational cooperation in the Mediterranean basin (see the ARLEM report on “Euro-Mediterranean integration: the role of regional and local authorities” – January 2020), has kept celebrating regular meetings for internal coordination and lobbying since its creation back in
February 2019 and throughout the current mandate. During the webinar on “Towards a Renewed Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean +25,” in November 2020 and at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the MedCoopAlliance contributed to the debates on the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis in the Med basin with a specific statement in May 2020 highlighting the role of Regions and local authorities in tackling the crisis. Likewise, during the workshop “MedCoopAlliance: how multilevel governance fosters green transition,” held online in October 2021, the discussion focused on the promotion of coordination among the different levels of governance to implement the green transition.

Nevertheless, the dimension of Neighbourhood policy is crucial in the development of territorial cooperation within the Mediterranean basin and in the achievement of a broad range of objectives, especially if we consider a number of governance, socio-economic, climate, environmental, and security challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, in February 2021, the EC communication, a “Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighborhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean” has triggered our debate on the shaping of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean, which was initially conveyed in the IMC’s position paper issued as a response and presented during the IMC Political Bureau in March 2021. This response intended to highlight the role of multi-level governance and the promotion of a macro-regional and sea-basin strategies in the Mediterranean.

These reflections nourished the discussions of the Working Group meeting in June 2021, in which the participants gave their opinions on the next steps to take towards the implementation of a global macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean. The perspectives and expectations on this topic were also highlighted in the study “Mediterranean +25 - Going macro-regional?” commissioned by IEMed, jointly with the Government of Catalonia, and elaborated by Professor Andrea Noferini. The study, presented during the WG meeting, analyses the territorial dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations with a special emphasis on the role of regional and local authorities and the impact of current trends in terms of governance, macro-regionalization, and transnational spaces.

The New Agenda for the Mediterranean as well as the green and digital transitions have been also central to the discussions of the MedCatDays 2022, organized in Barcelona in March 2022 with the aim of fostering the dialogue between the Mediterranean actors on the current challenges. The MedCoopAlliance had the opportunity to participate and highlighted the role of regional and local governments in the development of the macro-regional strategy.

All reflections of the WG were also conveyed to the IMC Political Bureaus and General Assemblies, as well as CPMR’s through its Task Force on Macro-regional strategies, works on Cohesion, and its own statutory meetings.
The Working group kept working around initiatives for improving accessibility to the Mediterranean area and connections of its territories through the TEN-T/CEF as well as for supporting the development of an integrated maritime approach for Blue Growth in the Mediterranean. The activities of this Working Group have been designed in consideration of the European Green Deal objectives - especially on the topics of transport, energy, and biodiversity -, the European recovery package, and the NextGeneration EU, which have been elaborated as a response to the social and economic crisis following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Working Group is articulated both on transversal elements - the Integrated Maritime Policy, maritime governance, MSP and MSFD, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management, biodiversity protection, management of marine and maritime knowledge and data, the maritime dimension of the macro-regional strategy - and on specific topics linked to the limitation of climate change impacts - marine renewable energies, the fight against marine litter and implementation of circular economy solutions, the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems, the adaption of coastline to climate change and resilience, fishing and aquaculture, sustainable maritime and coastal tourism.

In order to accomplish its mandate, 3 specific Task Forces have been organized and maintained in line with the organizational scheme of the previous mandate:

- The “Coordination board of the Bologna Charter” on management and sustainable development of coastal areas, which aim is to cover mainly the implementation and update of the Joint Action Plan of the Bologna Charter.
- “Fisheries and Aquaculture,” closely related to the activities on Fisheries at the CPMR level (new EMFAF opportunities post-2020 and the exchange of practices and views between the regions concerning the future of Fisheries in the Mediterranean, tackling the COVID-19 impacts on the sector).
- “The follow-up of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Agenda on the Blue Economy (BE) in the Mediterranean Regions” (which monitored and promoted specific initiatives, projects, and interactions with WestMED, BLUEMED, the UfMS Blue Economy virtual platform, and the UfM Stakeholder conferences on Blue Economy).

The work on transport has been dealt with in coordination with the CPMR Working Group Meetings and activities on Transport & Accessibility throughout the mandate, following all developments about the TEN-T and CEF reviews, putting forward the needs of the Mediterranean regions with lobbying activities, and monitoring the actions and projects of interest for the WG as well as the developments of the R-TAP in the Neighborhood area.

In this context, particularly relevant has been the European Commission’s proposal on the revision of the trans-European networks (TEN-T), which inaugurated a period of consultations - open until July 2022- for revising the guidelines set by Regulation 1315/2013, on national and EU investment in transport infrastructure and funding under the Connecting Europe Facility. For discussing the positions of the Mediterranean Regions on the review of the TEN-T and its contribution to the growth of the territories, in the framework of this Working Group, an online meeting has taken place on 26 April 2022, counting on the participation of Regional entities, as well as European Parliament members. Other contributions will follow in the next months.

More generally, we could say the activity of this Working Group has been very rich in the period 2020-2022, and, for the sake of brevity, we will shortly summarize its outputs. Some that had previously issues arisen and were addressed through various kinds of proxies (projects, external events, etc.) for the interest of the IMC and its members, feeding thoughts for future actions (e.g., marine renewable energies, marine litter, maritime sustainable transport/LNG, lagoons’ restoration).
The WG met online on 15 June 2021, back-to-back with the IMC General Assembly of July 2021, while its internal Task Forces met several times over the mandate. All political reflections arising from their activities were integrated into several IMC and CPMR Policy positions or Declarations. Alongside several seminars on specific topics also organized during the mandate - such as the above-mentioned meeting on the Mediterranean views on the TEN-T -, the IMC was represented in many external events dealing with the core business of the WG and its TFs (UfM, BLUEMED, etc.).

In parallel, the activities of the Working Group have been articulated in the implementation of key horizontal and strategic projects dealing with the blue economy, biodiversity protection, and blue bioeconomy. In synergy with previous projects, such as InnoBlueGrowth, MAREMED, COM&CAP, the Bologna Charter, and the EC’s initiatives, as well as the UfM Declaration on the Blue Economy and linking with EUSAIR and WestMed, the IMC participates since 2019 as a full partner in the development and implementation of the Interreg MED Blue Growth Community project - to be concluded in October 2022. Over the past years, the IMC, as leader of the Transferring component, has contributed to the elaboration of tools and solutions to be replicated and to the design of capitalization activities. We also recall the Interreg MED Programme’s Blue Growth Community position paper, endorsed during the IMC Plenary meeting in October 2021.

Capitalization event “Fostering Circular Blue Economy in the Mediterranean”, organized by Blue Growth Community, SwitchMed, BLUEfasma 10 May 2022, Barcelona

In the same way, the CPMR-IMC is involved as a full partner in the development and implementation of the horizontal project Interreg MED Biodiversity Protection Community (BPC), which by reusing tools and methods of the previous projects (e.g., Marina-MED, PANACEA, etc.), facilitates multisectoral dialogue with the scientific community to ensure an effective policy-management in the Mediterranean in relation to biodiversity protection and sustainable development - which is expected to feed wider strategies and policies (e.g., MSFD and MSP). Over 2022, in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Academy MBPC has developed a learning program on “Ecosystem-based management and Marine Spatial Planning”, seeing the collaboration of the CPMR-IMC. The CPMR-IMC has been also involved in the Interreg MED strategic project BLUE BIO MED for the promotion of innovation in the Mediterranean blue bioeconomy field by supporting better governance of innovation policies - its conclusion is previewed in September 2022.

On the other hand, in the framework of the Horizon Europe programme and under the Mission Ocean, seas, and waters objective for restoring the health of our oceans and waters by 2030, the
project **PREP4BLUE** has been approved and started in April 2022, while the Horizon Europe project BlueMissionMed is still under evaluation.

Notwithstanding, the synergies created through the implementation of projects, sectoral links have been maintained with key stakeholders such as the WestMED initiative or the Union for the Mediterranean – in complementarity with the issues addressed by the CPMR global activities, such as on Transports or the **SEARICA Intergroup**.

### Water & Energy

The Working Group focused its efforts on responding to the strategic challenges of water management in the Mediterranean, the promotion of energy efficiency in Mediterranean buildings, and agriculture and food sovereignty in the Mediterranean, by tackling water and energy as transversal elements (e.g., promoting the synergies between actions that involve a joint water-energy approach). The Working Group during the mandate has organized its activities around 2 specific Task Forces, namely energy renovation in Mediterranean Buildings and the AGRIMED Task Force.

The **Task Force on Energy Renovation in Mediterranean Buildings**, coordinated by Catalonia, focused on the follow-up of the Ljubljana Declaration as well as the capitalization of the previous projects’ results, such as the SHERPA project and its Joint Action Plan, which aimed at improving energy efficiency in the Public Buildings’ stock of the Mediterranean Area. More specifically, in this framework, the activities of the IMC kept going through the participation as an associated partner in the **Interreg MED Renewable Energy Community** horizontal project which, based on 6 modular projects, proposes a model to support rural and island communities in joining the energy transition.

The **AGRIMED Task Force – Agriculture and Food sovereignty in the Mediterranean**, coordinated by Région Sud, has been launched in March 2021 in response to the thematic report “Agriculture and Food Security in the context of Climate Change in the Mediterranean” adopted by the ARLEM in February 2021. Through the meetings of this internal Task Force, we debated international food systems, the Mediterranean food system, and diet, as well as the impacts of climate change on water resources management.

The meetings also presented solutions such as the **SolaQua** (H2020) project, launched in 2019 and counting on the participation of the IMC, which intends to raise awareness of innovative technologies for photovoltaic irrigation. The updates on the results of the SolaQua project have been regularly offered to the members of the IMC, also through this Task Force, and will follow in order to nourish the perspectives on the relationship between water and energy, and in synergy with the other Geographical Commissions, such as the Balkans Black Sea.

More generally, the Working group kept developing exchanges of best practices, a series of policy messages included in positions on water management, several project proposals (e.g., H2020, ENI CBC MED), and relations with the main frameworks of cooperation on the water at EU and Mediterranean level. Synergies have been fostered with the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change.
All the political reflections of the WG have also been included in the IMC policy papers during the mandate and contributed to the works of other key stakeholders (Interreg MED Communities, CoR’s ARLEM, UfM, etc.).

Economic & Social Cohesion

Further to its regular contributions to global CPMR reflections on Cohesion in the post-2020 period and the IMC reflections on the socio-economic elements linked to emerging Mediterranean strategies, the Working Group focused its attention on the support and promotion of initiatives for sustainable, inclusive, and smart socio-economic development in the Mediterranean.

In line with the previous mandates, particular attention was given to the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), as a follow-up of the Policy Declaration ratified by the IMC in October 2019, to Youth inclusion and engagement, sustainable tourism and culture.

The WG also kept implementing the works of its 2 Internal Task Forces:

- “Sustainable Tourism and Culture” implementing the IMC Political Agenda on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean with specific actions on coastal and maritime sustainable and cultural tourism in the Mediterranean, and through the development of concrete cooperation projects (Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED).
- “Vasco da Gama” regarding education and mobility in the maritime sector.

The Working Group has been particularly animated by the contribution and participation in numerous meetings/events organized in the framework of the projects on sustainable tourism and the synergies with external partners.

Indeed, in the framework of its works on Sustainable tourism entering under the activities of its Task Force on Culture and Sustainable Tourism, the IMC kept working mainly through HERIT DATA (Interreg MED) on sustainable mass tourism and open data, concluded in April 2022, BLEU TOURMED (Interreg MED) horizontal project for the Sustainable Tourism Community, DESTIMED+ (Interreg MED) on eco-tourism in Med destinations, CO-Evolve4BG (ENI CBC MED), extension of CO-EVOLVE (Interreg MED), on the “co-evolution” of human activities and natural systems in coastal zones based on the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) including southern Mediterranean partners, WINTERMED (Interreg MED) on seasonality solutions for Med islands, but also SMARTMED and BESTMED (Interreg MED) on the governance of tourism in the Mediterranean and as part of the activities developed in the framework of PANORAMED, CIVITAS DESTINATIONS on sustainable mobility and tourism, MedCoast4BG (UfM labeled), MD.net on the promotion of the Mediterranean Diet, while several projects were also supported for the call of the ENI CBC MED programme. Other thematic projects on Tourism are under evaluation for 2021-2027 (e.g. Euro-MED Sustainable Tourism Community).
In the framework of the pandemic recovery, and with the aim to ensure a true representation of Regions to discuss solutions to tackle its aftermaths, the IMC also elaborated a dedicated study on “The Impacts of COVID-19 and adaptation measures on the tourism sector” in Europe and the Mediterranean back in 2020, which was presented during the General Assembly of October 2020, and which recommendations are contained into the IMC 2020 Final Declaration.

Furthermore, in this context, it is worth recalling the WINTERMED Project Policy document, endorsed by the IMC Political Bureau in February 2022, committed to the development of an all-year-round sustainable and responsible tourism in Mediterranean island destinations and the Handbook on Social & Economic Regeneration of the Mediterranean after the crisis, elaborated by the UfM in collaboration with the CPMR-IMC, which aim is offering methods and tools for relaunching a sustainable post-COVID-19 tourism model.

Lastly, concerning youth, citizenship and intercultural dialogue, the WG focused its activities on the establishment and evolutions of the Mediterranean Youth Council, created in collaboration with the Lazio Region, back in December 2019 in Santa Severa and now co-ordinated with the French Association Les Têtes de l’Art.

The idea of the Youth Council is to foster the integration of the Youth perspective onto the issues dealt with by the Intermediterranean Commission. Indeed, regular dynamics of interactions have been established with the Youth Council, which actively participated and contributed to the reflections elaborated by the IMC (e.g., the meeting “Regions acting for a Plastic-free Mediterranean” and IMC Political Bureau 2022). Moreover, the Mediterranean Youth Council Plenary is going to meet in Sevilla on 10 June 2022, back-to-back with the IMC General Assembly, for a definition of its organization and the presentation of its political declaration.

All the policy-relevant messages arising from the WG are conveyed in the IMC declarations as well as in CPMR works, especially in the framework of the SEARICA Intergroup activities on the topic of tourism.
Synergies with CPMR Task Forces

Over the mandate, the IMC contributed to several meetings and conferences, projects proposals, synergies with networks, and in particular in synergy with the other CPMR Task Forces. During the past years, the IMC, together with the CPMR TF on Migration, has put a lot of effort into lobbying activities, exchange of experiences, and projects in supporting the Regions to face with the challenges linked to migrant reception and integration. For this reason, over this mandate, it has continued to participate in its working activities (and the REGIN project (AMIF) activities) and monitored its results, attending its meetings, and collaborating to its objectives.

Furthermore, with the relaunch of the CPMR Task Force on Macro-regions, the IMC has been regularly participating in the TF meetings to represent Mediterranean views on the subject, especially in consideration of the neighborhood policy revision.

Lastly, the IMC has also been contributing to and nourishing the works of the CPMR Climate Task Force, this topic has become of utmost importance in the strategic orientation of CPMR, and is all the most relevant for the Mediterranean to fulfill the objectives of the EU Green Deal and Agenda 2030.

The IMC participated in several debates on these various topics over the mandates, sometimes from the Secretariat or through its Members, whether it be on the levels of the TFs, its own Political Bureaus and General Assemblies, CPMR Political Bureaus and General Assemblies, or external events: the EU Week of Regions and Cities, the One Planet Summit, the European Maritime Day, the Mediterranean World Forum, the MedCatDays 2022, among others.

Inter-commissions activities & synergies

Several dynamics within CPMR have been fostered especially to start strengthening inter-commissions works that are specific to some geographical commissions without being of general interest to all CPMR members. The relationship between Geographical Commissions has been nourished by working on specific activities or projects in synergy, such as the SolaQua project (H2020) or the WINTERMED project (Interreg MED).
In line with the objectives proposed by the global action plan 2020-2022, and fostering the spirit of collaboration with external organizations and partners which characterizes our work, the IMC during the 2020-2022 mandate, sought both the implementation of new agreements and partnerships as well as the strengthening of old relationships with the aim of triggering synergies and improving cooperation and governance at the Mediterranean scale. Collaboration has been established with various actors coming from the public sector, the private, the academia, and multilateral authorities.

Particularly relevant is the collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean, initiated in 2013 with a Memorandum of Understanding, and further developed through the cooperation on the Blue Economy Agenda for the Mediterranean, exploiting the opportunity of being an observer in the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy and building on the agreement on Blue Economy signed in the period 2017- 2018. In the same way, the relationship with MedCities has been consolidated for sustainable territorial integrated development, and multilevel governance, in the framework of the MoU signed in 2016.

As previously mentioned, the IMC has also regularly collaborated with the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance, signed back in 2019, which on the other hand enforced the collaboration with other networks of local and regional authorities, such as the Euro-Regions Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Adriatic-Ionian, Arco Latino, and COPPEM in the strengthening of the role local and regional authorities play in the governance of the Mediterranean. Additionally, through this IMC Presidency, the IMC actively participated in all relevant debates and specific initiatives of the ARLEM, especially in the framework of the sustainable territorial development commission.

Furthermore, structured collaboration is in place with the BLUEMED and the WestMED initiatives (where the IMC is formally involved as observer) as well as the long series of partnerships that were strengthened with networks like UNIMED (Mediterranean Universities), CoNISMa, NECSTouR, Agency for Territorial Cohesion (Italy), MedPAN, the Travel Foundation, among others.

The IMC also boosted the endorsements and the direct signatories of the Bologna Charter for sustainable development of Mediterranean Coasts which is a strategic initiative for the Med regions.

It is finally worth mentioning that the IMC notably boosted its network of contacts during the mandate through the EU projects where it is involved, with centers of research, chambers of commerce, universities, NGOs, local and national Authorities, Institutions, clusters, etc.
Our activity reports

To explore the detailed reports of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission for the 2020-2022 mandate, please see:

- Activity Report (October 2020)
- Activity Report (March 2021)
- Activity Report (July 2021)
- Activity Report (October 2021)
- Activity Report (February 2022)
- Activity Report (June 2022)

Our projects

To learn more about our projects, have a look at our dedicated webpage and report on projects (updated until June 2022).