POSITION PAPER

Reacting to the Joint communication to the European parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighborhood

A New Agenda for the Mediterranean

JOIN(2021) 2 final

This position paper aims to reflect on some aspects presented in the abovementioned Communication, notably that of multi-level governance, the transversal, financial and economic aspects of the EU Neighborhood Policy, as well as the different socio-economic aspects it touches, albeit not exhaustively.

This document has been approved unanimously during the Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly on Friday 9 July 2021 (Online Meeting)
The past decade has seen the Mediterranean region affected by a significant number of social and political turbulences. Besides some progress, long-standing conflicts still hinder peace processes while uncertain political transitions, terrorism, or geopolitical and economic tensions can weaken any cooperation and cohesion attempt. On top of this, the management of migratory fluxes remains a serious challenge to overcome for Mediterranean Regions while attempting to the best possible extent to preserve human rights. All of this remains inscribed in the general context of the environmental and climate crisis, which tends to exacerbate existing tensions.

Nevertheless, it is also fair to acknowledge that the Barcelona Process, which celebrated its 25th anniversary at the end of 2020, has been instrumental in improving cooperation and cohesion in the basin to tackle these challenges together. Progress concerning integration policies within European borders has indeed been registered and partnerships with EU Neighborhood countries have appeared to be fruitful, in the hope to bring support to democracy and decentralization processes.

The SARS-CoV-2 crisis has made us even more so aware of the severe global environmental crisis we currently find ourselves in, as well as of the lack of sustainability of our societies and economies. This calls for immediate action to build a resilient, carbon neutral and environment integrated society, and especially in and for the Mediterranean region. Indeed, global warming grows at a 20% faster pace in the basin than other areas of the planet, being this increase especially critical for its island territories.

Before the evidence of relentless global interdependence, a global approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual aid is crucial to fully recover and move towards resolution and recovery. In this sense, the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process reminds us that the spotlight for the future of the Mediterranean and Europe should be put again on territorial cooperation and the European Neighborhood Policy. Among others, these are instrumental tools to tackle the effects of the sanitary crisis, contributing to giving equal opportunities to all territories particularly in the landmark process of ecological transition that the European Union aims to lead.

In view of these elements, and following previous policy positions, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, addressing European, Euro-Mediterranean and International institutions, wishes to recall the following elements in reaction to the European Commission’s Communication JOIN(2021) 2 final (hereafter, “Communication”) on a Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighborhood – A New Agenda for the Mediterranean:

**GOVERNANCE**

Some may say that on a macro-scale, emergency situations can render the coordination between different decisional levels more difficult and may depict the decentralization of powers as an obstacle to fast decision-making and execution. Local and regional authorities have nonetheless been at the forefront of these crises, witnessing their evolution on the one hand, while playing an undeniable and crucial role in supporting local communities in distress on the other. Usually, local and regional authorities also play a role of territorial and proximity diplomacy, complementary to that of the States.

1. **Multi-level governance** should therefore be strengthened and envisioned as a ruling basis for the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy (hereafter, ENP) which gives regional and local authorities their full place alongside States. This concept is unfortunately not quoted even once as such in the present Communication, while being of utmost importance. Indeed, multi-level coordination ensures better effectiveness of public policies, particularly in the context of crisis resolution (climate, health, etc.).

2. As more challenges are to come, the recovery from the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is still fragile, the ecological and digital transitions are yet to be accomplished, better coordination and fast decision-making processes must be enhanced across different institutional levels, sectors and social spheres. This should
not elude fundamental democratic rules and subsidiarity principles which, should it be otherwise, would turn around the whole policy’s intentions, giving rise to a feeling of distance – if not mistrust – between institutions and the civil society.

In such a volatile and uncertain geopolitical scenario, territorial actors call the European Union to represent a **stable and unambiguous point of reference** in defending democracy, human rights and their fundamental values.

3. Seconding the European Commission’s positioning,¹ the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission recalls that **democracy should represent the framework of action of all governance levels and across sectors**, protecting and supporting positive initiatives arising from the civil society, innovative economic actors or the Youth. Besides, democracy is a process built **gradually**, intrinsically linked to and reflecting the economic and social development of territories. In this respect, many local and regional authorities promote democratic processes and the capacity building of civil society through decentralized cooperation initiatives and projects.

As immediate emergencies may become more frequent, institutional responses must be combined with investments and long-standing transitional processes tackling the root causes of crises. While the European Recovery and Resilience Plans and the next funding agenda 2021-2027 are being discussed, the socio-economic asphyxiation of local communities requires their definition to reflect **territorial needs** and their implementation to be as quick and **relevant** as possible.

4. In this respect, it is crucial that regional and local authorities be involved in the **elaboration, revision and implementation** of the ENP and related financing instruments, which should put a strong emphasis on the **territorial dimension**. Thinking and implementing the ENP should be done using the **full potential** that regional and local communities offer with their **proximity to citizens**.

5. Multilevel governance and proximity to citizens must go hand in hand with the development of the concept of **Mediterranean Citizenship**, as a key element for the future of the region that can facilitate an identity boost of each of the people within it. The beginning of the 2021-2027 period, the New Agenda for the Mediterranean, and the European Pillar of Social Rights offer an ideal framework and momentum to promote the Mediterranean Citizenship.

6. More specifically, local and regional authorities should be involved and empowered throughout a **sound co-ownership** and **territorialization** of the ENP, considering decentralization of powers and decentralized cooperation as key instruments to promote peace, democracy, and to ensure a major stability and security of the Mediterranean area in the long run.

7. Likewise, **regional and local authorities networks** should assume a significant role in the collaboration and democratic effort pursued with Europe’s Southern Neighborhood, in particular because they

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¹ "A renewed commitment to the rule of law, human and fundamental rights, equality, democracy and good governance as the bedrock for stable fair, inclusive and prosperous societies, with respect for diversity and tolerance. Respect for human rights, including social and labor rights, gender equality and rights of the child, builds citizen’s trust. The rule of law and strong institutions that protect rights and fight inequalities, serve human and economic development by contributing to a safe and predictable business environment, help attract foreign direct investment, increase economic resilience and combat poverty and inequalities. Democratic governance and the systems of a responsive state, accountable institutions and the fight against corruption further underpin this commitment. Combatting manifestations of intolerance, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of xenophobia as well as protecting minorities must remain a shared priority across the region. Special attention will be given to the promotion of the role of women in society and the economy.” p.3 of the JOIN(2021) 2 final Communication.
oftentimes count on both EU and non-EU members. Their activities are key to strengthen links at territorial level and bring an optimal support to the implementation of any political decision issued at any multi-level governance level. **Their firsthand experiences are therefore all the most relevant and should be part of the evaluation and revision basis to the future evolution of the ENP.**

8. In this sense, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission is an actor with extensive experience and a consolidated track record of playing an active and leading role for the convergence of the Mediterranean area, through active political dialogue, concrete actions, programmes and synergies across all sectors. It should be considered as an example and involved in further reflections at Euro-Mediterranean level regarding the ENP.

9. Signed in 2019, the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (MedCoopAlliance) represents a concrete example of such multi-level governance and cooperation, complementary to that of macro-regional strategies or sea-basin initiatives, and is already working to “bring all emerging Mediterranean strategies and initiatives to operational application.”

10. The MedCoopAlliance represents a strong ally and tool to support the territorialization of the European Neighborhood Policy for the South, in coherence with the implementation of the 2030 Global Agenda and related strategies such as the European Green Deal and its Neighborhood dimension, the works of the Union for the Mediterranean or those of the ARLEM of the European Committee of Regions. The Alliance reiterates its availability to contribute to this enterprise.

11. In the same vein, macro-regional and sea basin strategies represent a relevant and proper approach to implement such territorialization and are frameworks of actions that should be exploited in synergy with the implementation of the ENP. The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) promoting concrete projects and initiatives like the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC), as well as the WestMED Maritime Initiative, are two virtuous models based on concrete actions of strategic partnerships, and a pattern to be enlarged and capitalized on.

12. The gradual setting-up of a global basin strategy, complementary to the EUSAIR and WestMED initiative towards the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin should be envisaged and supported through the ENP. In a long-term perspective, all relevant strategies and initiatives capable of reinforcing multi-level governance, cohesion and cooperation with Neighborhood countries, regions and territories should be strengthened, aligned and integrated. This, in a move towards a unique integrated long-term strategy

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2 Non-exhaustively, one could count on the proper CPMR Intermediterranean Commission as well as fellow networks such as MedCities, UCLG, Arco Latino, Euroregions, among others.

3 By sharing the mutual interest of building peace and stability in the Mediterranean region, and by enhancing the role of Local and Regional Authorities and of territorial cooperation programs, the MedCoopAlliance acts as a project platform on specific topics considered relevant for the sustainable and integrated development of the Mediterranean Area, and is tracing a path for the future of territorial cooperation in the area. Among the indications to operational actions, the MedCoopAlliance stresses the need to reinforce initiatives fostering capacity building of the local and regional administrations of the Mediterranean, through pilot projects and networking activities (i.e. The International Urban Cooperation, The Partnership for sustainable cities or the Urbact programs).


5 The WestMED maritime initiative adopted on December 4, 2018, a road map identifying six joint action priorities: Maritime activity hubs, biodiversity and the conservation of marine habitats, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable fishing and aquaculture in coastal communities, skills mobility, and maritime security and the fight against marine pollution.
for the Mediterranean or at least a solid coordination mechanism that could see the light over the current
decade. Their contribution should be fully integrated into the ENP, its own governance as well as in its way
of addressing governance issues for the Mediterranean.

13. The emergence of a macro-regional strategy covering the whole Mediterranean is a priority issue in
order to strengthen the convergence of financial instruments (international donors, development
agencies, EU funds, development aid policy funds of States and local authorities, etc.), and especially
transnational programmes in the Mediterranean (NEXT MED, EURO-MED and ADRION) 2021-2027. The
effectiveness of public action undeniably depends on a strategy shared by the States and local authorities,
geared towards an operational action plan. This strategy could be based on the work undertaken in the
framework of the WestMED and EUSAIR initiatives.

14. A balanced but differentiated approach according to the territories and countries is a fair measure to
achieve a prosperous and effective Neighborhood Policy. However, the distinction should concern not
only partner countries but be extended to the different territories and regions which often present
extremely diversified issues, social fabrics and political, cultural and economic characteristics, and have
therefore different needs and objectives. It is, therefore, relevant to encourage the existing multilateral
fora in which all the aspects linked to the Mediterranean cohesion will be dealt with: culture, common
values, best practices and so on, such as the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation in which
entities from the three sides of the Mediterranean take part. Likewise, EU delegations within neighbor
countries can be better exploited in this respect, beside the aforementioned local actors. In this respect,
collaboration between communities and EU delegations in the implementation of the ENP should be
strengthened.

15. In the framework of an effective territorialization, it is also necessary to take into account the geographic
border condition of many of Mediterranean islands in the design and implementation of the ENP, as
highlighted by the recent opinion of the Committee of Regions “Towards a Sustainable Use of natural
resources within the Mediterranean insular context.”

16. Beyond this, the new ENP should undoubtedly promote decentralized cooperation between regional and
local entities in the Mediterranean region, for example, through the Decentralized Cooperation Assembly
of the European Committee of the Regions. This type of cooperation has demonstrated its great added
value over the years, seems more appropriate and causes a greater positive impact on the territories
from the policies developed thereof.

17. Furthermore, South-South cooperation between territories with similar characteristics and needs should
be boosted through the ENP in order to make programs and projects more focused on objectives and
with a real impact on the local community. While the respect of the internal rules of each partner State is
necessary, the European Commission can establish incentive mechanisms for these States, awarding
“bonuses”, including financial, for initiatives fostering genuine multi-level governance and global
sustainability. Local and Regional authorities can fully contribute to the strengthening of South-South
collaboration through the driving of multilateral projects financed under European programmes (such as
NEXT MED) or through multi-stakeholder decentralized cooperation.

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6 Towards sustainable use of Natural Resources within the Mediterranean insular context, NAT-VII-004, 14th plenary session, Rapporteur Francina Armengol i Socías, President of the Balearic Islands Government: Link
7 Sustainability should be considered in all its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.
TRANSVERSALITY IN THE EU NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

The Mediterranean is the “ground zero” of the global climate crisis that affects 500 million people on three continents (Murcia). Mediterranean Regions’ specific vulnerability to climate change often requires adequate cooperation and funding, while it is also important to recall the EU’s commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 (compared to 1990). In its outline, the Communication notably addresses the issues of Human development, good governance and the rule of law; Resilience, prosperity and digital transition; Peace and security, Migration and mobility; and the Green transition through climate resilience, energy, and environment. As this effort is laudable, a better interrelation across these issues is nonetheless needed, while an approach to a different socio-economic vision for the basin is unavoidable. And this, in order for the ENP to fulfill its role in supporting the move of the Mediterranean towards a different socio-economic paradigm for more sustainability globally.

18. A convergence policy at the borders of the European Union between the different strands of actions, throughout a cross-sectoral focus envisaging the Mediterranean region as a unique geo-strategic area, is strategically relevant. The coordination and complementarity of the ENP with other policies of the EU, such as the European Green Deal, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, as well as Research & Development, Transport, Mobility, Integrated Maritime Policy, Environment, Energy and Cohesion will ensure more effectiveness for the ENP itself as well as the Neighborhood dimension of the rest of EU policies. These synergies and integrations should boost the socio-economic development of partner countries in a sustainable way, improving the mainstreaming of the EU acquis.

19. The extension and the adaptation to the European Neighborhood Policy of the concepts, principles and methodology of the EU Cohesion Policy, as recommended in the ARLEM report on a “Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean” (2014), and as presented in the CPMR Analysis on investment guidance for 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy (2019) is a crucial step to implement such convergence. A genuine, partnership-based and long-term role for local and regional authorities in the framework of an overhauled ENP should be sought, to be restructured around an approach that takes on board territories in their diversity and as contributors to development.

20. The ENP should better acknowledge its own transversality to Mediterranean socio-economic sectors, while considering to a more relevant extent the transversality of the environmental and climate crisis. Cooperating towards mitigating climate change impacts and adapting to its effects, e.g. by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the building of more resilient societies and economies should be the angle under which any action for socio-economic improvement should be undertaken.

21. Given the cross-cutting dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their transformative potential, the EU should structure regional strategies to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerate transitions towards sustainability in the Mediterranean over the next ten years, based on a Mediterranean macro-regional governance framework, including the different levels of government. The role of cities and regions is essential, as they are responsible for the implementation of different policies related to the SDGs: urban growth, climate change, socio-economic inequalities, energy, green and digital transition, and good governance.

22. In this sense, the “renewed commitment to improving the [Mediterranean] business climate [...] to build the trust of local and international private sector operators, attract investors and increase trade” as quoted in the Communication is indeed crucial. Nonetheless, it should not overlook the imperativeness of
improving the business environment towards more sustainable projects and the greening of economies.

23. As per its transversality, **green and sustainable reform should therefore be the pillar principle of the ENP for the Mediterranean** (and not just a “section” of it), if not a **conditio sine qua non** to strengthening socio-economic partnerships across sectors and in a multi-level governance way, also fostering public-private partnerships, cluster dynamics and links with the civil society.

24. Local and regional levels’ experience in socio-economic sustainability should be **capitalized** to **incentivize** other territories and national levels to move towards this direction, hence supporting more commitments to building up paths to global sustainability.

25. The **social and environmental responsibility** of enterprises should be considered to a better extent and as a prerequisite to the attribution of public funding, while the implementation of **sustainable finance principles** should be strongly encouraged.

**FINANCE, ECONOMIC MODELS AND COOPERATION**

The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission acknowledges the proposal for the Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighborhood, which seems encouraging.⁹

26. In this respect, the Neighborhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), as **stated** by the MedCoopAlliance, should promote **flexible funding** throughout an active role of local and regional authorities in indicating the needs of territories, upon relevance.

27. Besides, it would be necessary to enhance support to the **socio-economic setting of the Mediterranean**, mainly made out of micro and SMEs, for increasing the rate of bankable innovative projects. The culture of finance should be adapted to Mediterranean territorial realities to preserve their socio-cultural heritage while moving towards more sustainability, and not the way around. Solutions brought by in the European Commission’s Communication seem to be based on traditional economic principles and levers, which so far have not demonstrated their ability to implement sustainable economies. New paradigms should therefore be sought.

28. In relation to the search for these new paradigms, in line with the Commission’s Communication, and due to their great capacity for adaptation and growth, now more than ever start-ups and innovation ecosystems can be useful in driving economic recovery during and after the SARS-CoV-2 crisis. These ecosystems of entrepreneurship, innovation and technological investment in the Mediterranean should therefore be promoted as a driver of job creation, economic development and digital transformation for a more sustainable and socially responsible future.

29. As stated in the **CPMR Intermediterranean Commission’s related-declaration**, Social and Solidarity Economy, like cooperativism, presents several assets that should be better exploited through the ENP. Indeed, functioning economies, democracy and social rights constitute the intertwined bases leading to

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⁸ The European Commission’s Directorate for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries has worked in collaboration with WWF, the International Sustainability Unit and the EIB to propose a set of principles to be applied by financial actors.

⁹ With €7 billion under the Neighborhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the provisioning for EFSD+ guarantees and blending under Neighborhood Investment Platform of €30 billion in the Southern Neighborhood.
paths of conflict resolution and the improvement of populations’ well-being, which makes more sustainability aspects of on-going and future policies and projects unavoidable.

30. To this end, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission acknowledges that the engagement of EU Member States is indeed key to enhance “an upgraded and intensified political dialogue across the Mediterranean,” as stated in the Communication. Moreover, let’s remind ourselves as well that local and regional authorities are often times very much inclined to collaborate with other administrations or programs as well, being effective protagonists of political and operational dialogue too.

31. Nevertheless, these same local and regional authorities are sometimes impeded to collaborate with other administrations or programs because of geopolitics and national impediments. The European Neighborhood Policy, in collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean and existing macro-regional frameworks, has therefore a clear diplomatic role to play. This, in order to help overcome these barriers and enable a broader cooperation framework for local, regional administrations, and territorial actors throughout the basin.

32. Along the same lines, funds dedicated to the implementation of the ENP should seek synergies with territorial cooperation programs and frameworks already existing in the basin, as can be the ENI CBC MED program (among others) or macro-regional and sea-basin strategies. Increasing synergies, capitalization and mainstreaming of cooperation initiatives and project results into multi-level governance policies will ensure a more rational use of funds for countries and their territories.

MEDITERRANEAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS

During the past years, several studies, reports and contributions providing a framework of action in the direction of more sustainable economies have been published. On their end, the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission respectively offered two operational insights: the Technical Note for the Renewal of the Territorial Agenda (2019), and a compendium of its expertise with the Manual for Integrated Territorial Development, coming in addition to several other projects capitalization materials and position papers.

33. As a fast and effective ecological transition has now become imperative, it is worth reminding that sustainable blue economy represents a golden opportunity for the Mediterranean region, as most population clusters are located on coastal areas and could therefore benefit from it. The sustainable blue economy dimension should therefore be much strengthened within the ENP, in synergy with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the EU Green Deal, the Union for the Mediterranean’s Blue economy Declaration, as well as cooperation programs already tackling this theme or planning to do so. Sustainable blue economy should nonetheless be developed within the context of an integrated coastal zone management in the Mediterranean, and taking as guiding principles the precautionary principle and the application of an ecosystem-based approach.

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10 For example, the ENI CBC MED program, which agreements several Mediterranean countries still have not signed at national level, impeding territorial actors from taking part in cooperation projects that could be most beneficial to their sustainable socio-economic development.

11 The Barcelona Convention’s precious work on a Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP) is an essential tool to be considered for mobility, social cohesion, protection of the environment, protection and promotion of Mediterranean culture and its interactions. Following its principles, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development provides vision and tools to guide any kind of policy aiming at building a peaceful and prosperous region, keeping in mind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
34. Besides, should the ENP see its sustainable blue economy dimension strengthened, it is fundamental to advance maritime and coastal activities following the principles of the Integrated Maritime Policy as well. The latter should be declined at all levels and based on an integrated management of coastal areas. (Baleares) Likewise, the ENP must also ensure that the economic development of the Mediterranean region occurs in line with the respect and maintenance of natural marine, coastal and inland ecosystems, fauna and flora, and the fight against climate change. Consistency with the European Green Deal and the “do not harm” principle is essential.

35. **Sustainable maritime and coastal tourism** represents a sector that should receive specific and dedicated attention from the ENP. Hardly hit by the SARS-CoV-2, the maritime and coastal tourism industry – beyond being a consequent component of the blue economy – presents great room and opportunities for improvement of its sustainability. Far beyond a mere sector, it is also a bond for the people of the Mediterranean, providing employments on the one hand while enhancing the Mediterranean cultural identity across its three shores and across the world on the other.

36. Beyond this, blue economy can be a **perfect driver to build an integrated strategy** at Mediterranean level, for example as a first step towards a wider cooperation of policies connected to the three pillars of sustainable development. For example, the fight against climate change and adaptation to its impacts, energy efficiency, water management, social and solidarity economy, circular economy and agroecology, youth policies and employability, among others.

37. In this sense, the deployment of innovative technologies such as renewable energy and clean hydrogen production in the Mediterranean should to the best possible extent use construction material coming from **clean sources** for their respective infrastructures. Beyond promoting these technologies, it is of utmost importance that the ENP encourages the use of clean sources for the production of infrastructures material, hence helping lowering the potential negative externalities of such technologies already prior to their implementation.

38. Along the same lines, the fact that the digital transition is yet to be fully accomplished in the Mediterranean, e.g. the digitalisation of regional and local administrations (e-administration), particularly in the southern Mediterranean, gives the opportunity to implement it in a more sustainable way, relying on **impact and pre-assessment studies** that can be done in countries that are more advanced on the matter. Let us not forget that digitalization, albeit to a lesser extent, also exerts pressures on and pollution on the environment (non-recyclable material, precious metal unsustainable extraction methods, pressure on local extraction communities...). In this sense, the fulfilment of digitalized economies so far encouraged by the ENP for the Mediterranean should be performed in a sound way in order for it to avoid being counterproductive as regards the sustainability objectives of Global Agendas and that of the EU Green Deal and other Mediterranean strategies and initiatives (e.g. WestMED, EUSAIR, or BLUEMED).

39. Furthermore, regarding connectivity for an integrated basin, the **Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region** (RTAP) 2014-2020 also deserves to be renewed, aligned to current global and Euro-Mediterranean strategies, and effectively implemented, ensuring the incorporation of island Regions. The RTAP would constitute a great step ahead and a real future integrated multimodal Euro-Mediterranean transport network, and even more considering the full capacity and competence of local and regional authorities in this enterprise, when relevant.

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40. Beyond this, let’s also keep in mind that Youth mobility is a powerful tool to integration of the basin. Multicultural exchange in an academic framework has a direct impact on integration, social mediation and transfer of knowledge unequivocally. Mindful of brain drain, the revision of the ENP should see to it to increase scholarships quantitatively and qualitatively for Neighborhood country students through adequate programs, offering concrete advantages for universities committed in such activities, fostering administrative capacity building in the universities of origin and arrival, and promoting student association to adequately welcome foreign students. Likewise, particular attention should be paid to vulnerable populations.

41. Heritage and culture are real challenges for the sustainable development of territories (economy and crafts, tourism, social links, etc.). They contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants and to the affirmation of a specific Mediterranean identity. Intercultural dialogue also contributes to strengthening the links between the Mediterranean peoples, to reinforcing mutual knowledge and respect. They should be adequately valorized within the ENP.

42. International mobility should also be addressed between non-EU countries, in order to facilitate mobility and peoples’ fluxes among them, but also to strengthen social, economic and political relationships between any local and regional authorities of the Mediterranean region.

Last but not least, one knows that environmental, demographic, political, social and economic factors may inevitably and structurally influence migration fluxes, which, coupled with the climate crisis, might become more significant over the years to come across Mediterranean countries and regions.

43. This potential situation would require an open and constructive attitude from governments, aiming at fostering social and professional integration and the fight against discriminations at territorial level. This should be done by involving local and regional authorities in decision-making for reception so as to promote optimal levels of cohabitation and social cohesion, when relevant and appropriate, and by strengthening cooperation with third countries.

44. While firmly affirming the right to a safe, orderly and regular migration, the ENP should constructively address the social and economic causes of leaving in the countries of origin. This approach should be based on reciprocal sustainable socio-economic development across Mediterranean territories in order to lead to favorable outcomes.

45. Supporting shared responsibility, cooperation in the field of integration and anti-discrimination with third countries, legal pathways and adequate resources by enhancing multilevel governance and the role of regions should be encouraged by the ENP to address migration issues. As suggested by the CPMR Position Paper on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, these principles to migration issues would help avoid an approach through the security prism and rather encourage that of solidarity and sustainable development.

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The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission gathers around 40 Member Regions from 8 different EU member states and other countries: Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, and Spain. It is open to all the different sub-national levels in all Mediterranean countries.

The gathering of the Intermediterranean Commission Members Regions represents a bond of peace, stability and development between three continents, Europe, Africa and Asia.

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