ACTION PLAN 2020-2021

I – Introduction and context

As a major axis of European construction and an essential challenge for the future of the Mediterranean, economic and social cohesion aims at achieving a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the territories. It helps reduce economic disparities between countries and regions and foster intercultural dialogue and equal opportunities for every citizen, hence strengthening the sense of belonging both to the European Union and the Mediterranean.

With the EU enlargement, regional disparities have been increasing, compounded by the late 2000s financial and economic crisis and, in recent years, by migratory challenges or the Brexit transition. Lately, the sanitary and socio-economic crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated social and territorial inequalities, while weakening the sense of belonging. As a strong response to it, the EU Recovery Plan provides different tools to tackle its dramatic consequences. The issue of cohesion in Europe is addressed by some specific actions (REACT-EU and the Just Transition Mechanism) supporting public investments and key structural reforms in the Member States, in order to achieve a recovery in line with a green and digital transition alongside a sustainable and inclusive growth.

In addition, Mediterranean territories must face cross-cutting socio-economic challenges, while the need to implement a transition towards a more inclusive, green and sustainable economy is becoming more pressing. Adopting a stronger solidarity and cooperative approach therefore remains key to find common solutions to common issues.

Besides, the EU’s action as a global stakeholder and the Neighbourhood and Enlargement policies at the Southern borders of the EU represent diplomatic and cooperation frameworks that should be optimized. In fact, for several countries from the South and the East of the basin, the COVID-19 upheaval occurred in a framework of democratic transition and decentralisation, sometimes impacting a weak social fabric often relying on informal economy while tending to marginalize even more some fragile populations such as women and youth.

Nonetheless, the current crisis also represents a unique opportunity to foster cooperation and dialogue and to develop a new socio-economic cohesion paradigm both at the local and regional levels, towards a more inclusive and united society. In this framework, the MedCoopAlliance, created in February 2019, also issued a statement in this direction. Youth will also play a key role in this process, representing one of the potentials that can positively be tapped into from all perspectives (dialogue, inclusion, training, mobility, entrepreneurship etc.).
Accompanying, supporting and stimulating these key political and strategic initiatives for economic and social cohesion in the Mediterranean region is an essential work area that corresponds to the objectives of the Intermediterranean Commission 2020-2021 action plan.

II – Background

Since 2014, the Intermediterranean Commission “Economic and Social Cohesion” working group (WG) has been active to develop a specific position of Mediterranean regions on key sectoral aspects regarding sustainable socio-economic development. Over the 2014-2020 programming period and upcoming one, several activities and exchanges among Mediterranean regions and external partners have nourished the group’s reflections, benefitting as well from the promotion and elaboration of concrete cooperation projects in line with its main axes.

In the period 2020-2021 the Intermediterranean Commission wishes to renew its objectives for this Working Group and implement a series of priority actions. The Working Group will remain co-chaired by Occitania and Lazio regions and will rely – in the view of an effective and shared cooperation – on sub-groups (Task forces) led by other Mediterranean regions, on specific topics or actions linked to the group’s work areas.

III – Main objective

The general objective of the work led by the working group is to support sustainable socio-economic development in the basin through the strengthening of Mediterranean cohesion, and the realization of concrete and effective actions to help tackle common identified challenges.

This may be done through strengthening links between the three shores of the basin to share practices towards the reduction of socio-economic disparities. Cooperation is also key to foster a harmonious cohabitation in a stabilised space of mutual understanding, peace and security, offering a Mare Nostrum bearer of opportunities and trust in the future for youth, access to employment and openness to intercultural dialogue.

The Regions’ role is significant in providing responses to the “Mediterranean challenge.” Therefore, another broad objective of the Working group has been to highlight the effectiveness of their initiatives, through the exchange and capitalization of good practices. Monitoring and lobbying actions on policies at a European and Euro-Mediterranean levels will aim at improving the EU’s response with regards to strategies and policies that have an impact on the Mediterranean territory in the development of a true social and economic cohesion designed to support citizens and that promotes both the sense of belonging to the EU, and the emergence of a Mediterranean citizenship and identity. Finally, concrete projects will be developed through partnerships, which will help strengthen the territorial and decentralised cooperation actions.

IV – Work areas and actions

1. Support and promotion of initiatives for a sustainable, inclusive and smart socio-economic development in the Mediterranean

   A. Promotion and development of Social and Solidarity entrepreneurship: emphasising regions’ role and initiatives in partnership with key stakeholders of the basin

With around 15 million European workers, Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) plays a significant and increasing role within the economic landscape of the EU. It is one of the most interesting potentials for the Mediterranean with more than 400,000 companies and organisations in the Western basin alone, which represents more than 6 million jobs. This economic development model that places the human dimension before profits, gathers companies and organisations that reconcile economic development and social utility.
Furthermore, in the framework of the COVID-19 crisis, social economy turns out to be an even more relevant opportunity, as SSE actors have supported the recovery from the crisis by providing innovative solutions. By addressing societal needs and building economic activities on local roots and with a participatory governance, they can help reshape the post-crisis economy by promoting more inclusive and sustainable economic models.\(^1\) SSE constitutes therefore an opportunity to recover from the crisis in a more sustainable way, answering to EU and Mediterranean global objectives (Green Deal, ENP…). It has been also demonstrated that social economy contributes to regional development, and that common strategies in public policies can be critical to its implementation.\(^2\)

Moreover, the internationalisation of companies (including SSE-based organisations), the access to Northern and Southern markets, the establishment of enterprises in the territories, the support in creating new businesses or self-entrepreneurship/self-employed, are part of the numerous forms of actions which facilitate the development of new innovative economic activities, and could be considered to strengthen cooperation with Euro-Mediterranean countries partnership.

**Priority goals for the 2020-2021 mandate:**

1. Implement the Intermediterranean Commission **policy positioning** (2019) on the definition and common specific features of the SSE, in terms of European Union policies, namely in the post-2020 period perspective;
2. Put across the Mediterranean Regions role and action in the Social and Solidarity Economy’s development and support to social innovation in the territories;
3. Create synergies between SSE actors in the territories and link strategic alliances with external partners;
4. Seize funding opportunities in the perspective of realising an SSE cooperation project in the Mediterranean, or promoting this type of actions under the lead of one or more members of the Intermediterranean Commission;
5. Share results of on-going regional and European projects on SSE, notably the RESET project (COSME) on employment and SSE, and for which Occitanie is working in collaboration with two other IMC regions (Valencia and Emilia-Romagna)
6. Share information of interest about SSE with the Intermediterranean Commission members (events, reports, legislations, European consultations, etc.)

The Intermediterranean Commission “Economic and Social Cohesion” working group, developed a research and analysis work on SSE at a basin level (prospecting report) back in 2015-2016. This work mapped the state of play, the features and influence of the sector for a more inclusive economy and fair social dimensions. This study constituted the basis to the Political Declaration “for a Social and Solidarity-based Mediterranean.”

Secondly, capitalisation and exchange of good practices, exchange of experiences, particularly through major political events, will allow disseminating the positive impact of the previously identified actions and results of the analysis. This will offer the opportunity to develop tools that will strengthen the initiatives for sustainable, inclusive and smart economic development in the Mediterranean and beyond. The development of partnerships with the main SSE stakeholders in the Mediterranean will strengthen the exchanges, and will be an opportunity to develop a genuine structured network for the SSE promotion on the Euro-Mediterranean level. The participation in events or SSE forums will also strengthen the Mediterranean links and opportunities for exchanges between key stakeholders regarding this topic. The Working Group will be able to promote the participation of the Intermediterranean Commission regions and convey the Commission’s reflections on the SSE.

Finally, the Working Group will be able to work on pilot initiatives/projects and/or on applications to be submitted to calls under the cooperation programmes in the Mediterranean.

**Types of actions which could be developed in connection with the previous mandate:**

\(^{1}\) **OECD,** *Social economy and the COVID-19 crisis: current and future roles*, July 2020

\(^{2}\) **OECD,** *Regional Strategies for the Social Economy,* May 2020
• Follow-up of the work of European institutions and Euro-Mediterranean networks concerning Social and Solidarity Economy in Europe and in the Mediterranean; follow-up of IMC’s prospects report on the definition of SSE and implementation of its policy declaration thereof;
• Elaboration of a cooperation project or a concrete action in the field of SSE, related to Mediterranean territories actors and networks about targeted sectors (training, blue economy, circular economy, etc.);
• Development of cross-border exchanges between future and young entrepreneurs of Social and Solidarity Economy on the Mediterranean level (e.g. the European Exchange Programme/Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs – EYE);
• Organisation of an experience exchange workshop between Regions, in order to capitalise on tools and instruments existing on the regional and local levels;
• Reinforced use of the Working Group’s collaborative tools already existing in order to allow members to share smoothly information and current events on ESS topics (e.g. Dropbox, database, work, studies, newsletter, agenda/calendar etc.);
• Lobbying and promotion of initiatives on entrepreneurship carried out by the Intermediterranean Commission Regions and events such as “the Mediterranean Economic Week” in Marseille, or “the Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders” in Barcelona.
• Follow-up and contribution to the ARLEMIN activities and reports, and to its Commission for sustainable territorial development on the topics related to the promotion of employment and regional development;
• Capitalisation, dissemination and labelling of the initiatives for SSE of the Mediterranean regions.

B. Sustainable tourism promotion as a trigger for sustainable, cultural and economic development in the Mediterranean

Tourism is an essential sector for the economic growth of the Mediterranean as it provides employment and development opportunities that are much needed especially in the most weakened regions. The WTO figures confirm that tourism in the Mediterranean is a fundamental pillar of the economy, with more than 300 million international arrivals and representing more than €200 billion of export revenues, that is to say 12% of total exportations.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, this sector was constantly increasing with 10 million new arrivals expected between now and 2030. Nonetheless, the outbreak negatively affected the tourism sector: a study drafted by the IMC actually points out a 58%-78% decrease of activities during 2020 with 11 million employees from the sector at risk all over Europe. The study also identifies the consequences on sustainable development objectives. Besides some difficulties though, Mediterranean regions, and particularly insular ones, have provided adequate and resilient responses to the crisis, while showing their capacity to combine short-term recovery and long-term green and digital transitions. The European Tourism Convention, held in October, also marked an important step towards a sustainable and collaborative recovery.³

The mass of activities and travels involves the need for infrastructures, the development of services and innovation, and remains the origin of new economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges to be overcome. Becoming increasingly aware of the adverse repercussions of mass tourism, it is essential to develop a sustainable form of tourism that represents a path towards socially and economically sustainable and fair development. Tourist facilities and activities respect the environment and preserve natural and cultural resources in the long term.

A specific ‘Culture and Sustainable Tourism’ Task Force was set up as part of this group in 2015 and led by Crete. It was devoted to defining the framework and the political initiatives and projects on tourism of the Intermediterranean Commission, to monitor the pan-European dialogue with cruise tourism operators

³ While the European Commission suggested to take advantage of the SURE program and the European Stability Mechanism to recover the sector on the short-term, a recent report by the European Parliament (TRAN-PR-657187) complained the lack of direct support to the tourism sector in the Recovery Plan.
and ports in the Mediterranean or to contribute from the perspective of tourism to emerging strategies such as West Med. Similarly, these reflections fueled the exchanges and policy documents of projects such as COM&CAP MarInA-Med.

The area of reflection and action of the Task Force includes coastal and maritime tourism (such as Destimed+ and BestMed, about ecotourism and green tourism planning), but also urban tourism linked to culture, heritage, gastronomy, economic activities discovery (business tourism, industrial heritage tourism and scientific tourism). As the lack of comparable data on sustainable tourism was identified as an obstacle to develop more effective territorial strategies, two projects were implemented in this sense (HeritData, SmartMed). These projects also remind us of the need to promote territorial cooperation, while capitalizing on their respective results for further project development and policy support (Interreg MED/EuroMed or the ENI CBC MED/NEXT Med programmes, work with the Union for the Mediterranean – MedCoast4BG, etc.).

In the framework of the COVID-19 outbreak, the recently approved 2020 Final Declaration mentions the different positive steps taken towards a better territorial cooperation, as well as the fundamental values, objectives and strategies for an effective and sustainable recovery of the tourism sector.

Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandate:

- Monitoring of the implementation of the EC’s Communication regarding “EU strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritme Tourism”. (Analysis conducted in synergy with the Intermediterranean Commission “Transport and IMP” working group and the CPMR tourism group).
- Advocacy actions towards DG MARE on costal and maritime tourism with the Blue Growth, sea-basin emerging strategies, and towards the DG ENTERPRISE regarding the programme for Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME programme).
- Reflections and support to the IMC Final Declaration on Sustainable Tourism’s implementation, for a smart, sustainable and inclusive recovery of the sector.
- Development of a real European platform of Mediterranean tourism’s key stakeholders, through partnerships with organisations like NECSTOUR to develop works on indicators.
- Reflection on a future agenda on coastal and maritime tourism in the Mediterranean and in connection with the reflections on macro-regional and maritime basin strategies (particularly EUSAIR and West Med).
- Capitalisation, development and monitoring of specific projects (cultural itineraries linked to sea products, potential of cross-selling for cultural tourism and territorial marketing, fishing tourism (e.g. in the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic-Ionian area), mobility for students and academicians, universities offering training in tourism, Mediterranean nutrition, tourism and open data, etc.).
- Participation in project events linked to O.S. 3.1 of the Interreg MED program (HP Sustainable Tourism Community), capitalization of results on coastal and maritime tourism and synergy with projects targeting the topic, brainstorming sessions for the elaboration of cooperation projects.
- Specific synergies with the Islands Commission on the specific challenges of the islands in the development of sustainable tourism (energy and environmental pressure, use of resources, accessibility etc. e.g. Link to CIVITAS Destinations)
- Partnership development with external public and private stakeholders (observatories...).
- Capitalisation of the Integrated Territorial Development manual in application to sustainable tourism, in collaboration with the UfM technical assistance.

Priority actions for the 2020-2021 mandate:

- Renew the Task Force’s specifications and organize a meeting at the Intermediterranean Commission’s 2020 GA to share the main developments related to sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean and current projects.

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4 Voici un article de lancement des deux projets.
• Capitalisation of previous projects outputs: Mitomed+, Co-Evolve, BLEUTOUMED, CIVITAS DESTINATIONS
• Follow-up of the implementation of approved key projects where the Intermediterranean Commission is involved: Destimed+, WinterMed, BestMed, SmartMed, HeritData;
• Monitoring of ENI CBC Med “Co-Evolve4BG” project implementation, optimising its role in capitalising experiences of socio-economic development and environment sustainability in local coastal systems;
• Implement / support the development of new project proposals addressed to link Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism as key for sustainable local development inside and around protected areas;
• Contribute to the conceptualization of new ENI CBC MED projects or other programmes
• Contribute to the tourism reflections of the PANORAMED project – axis 4 governance MED INTERREG; trying to keep a key role and participating in some of Strategic Projects of PANORAMED alongside with some IMC regions;
• Support the implementation of the Co-Evolve spin-off in the Southern Med through the collaboration with the UfM: MEDCOAST4BG
• Contribute to the tourism reflections of the PANORAMED project (Axis 4 governance Interreg MED), notably through the BESTMED and SMARMED projects;
• Contribute to reflections on tourism in the context of emerging strategies: EUSAIR, WESTMED and other key initiatives: BLUEMED, Agenda Blue Economy UfM.
• Contribute to the capitalization of the Integrated Territorial Development manual in application to sustainable tourism, in collaboration with the UfM technical assistance.

C. Other possible priorities to develop:

• If several regions wish to do so, and there is a one leading region in particular, the Group - in the future could evaluate the possibility to address its efforts also on other subjects such as “Promoting innovation in industrial and technological processes in the Intermediterranean Commission Regions and the industrial revival in the Mediterranean”, in connection with open and big data.

2. Promotion of specific actions in favour of democracy and citizenship, youth and intercultural dialogue.

A. Support training, mobility, integration and employment access for young people in the Mediterranean

Mediterranean regions are strongly affected by the extent of the endemic youth unemployment and by the social integration problem that result from it; the COVID-19 outbreak has further exacerbated this reality, increasing all over the region for example the percentage of NEETs, the risk of poverty, and social exclusion. The fight against youth unemployment is an essential priority for the construction of a viable socioeconomic context in every European territory and beyond. Developing a real multi-level policy for Youth Employment is a true challenge, that includes all the political stakeholders and that should imply an effective coherence between EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries actions, and the ones put in place and necessary at a regional and local level. More generally, mobilization of youth is considered a key element for the social and cultural integration of the Mediterranean region and its future.

An effective coordination of actions and initiatives for the development of training pathways and a sustainable efficient professional integration is a primary objective. Territorial differences in the models of integration will also have to be considered and be included.

Regions have direct experience as they implement measures to further education for the development of skills adapted to the professional world, encourage insertion and socio-cultural development opportunities, independence, bring support in terms of income and tax advantages, develop youth entrepreneurship and promote their mobility in Europe and in the Mediterranean.
The Intermediterranean Commission “Social and Economic Cohesion” working group aims to promote effective actions in the Mediterranean regions and to influence in a more effective way European policies in order to improve the instruments (including financial support) and intensify initiatives to fight youth unemployment.

Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandate:

- Development of a Mediterranean regional and local authorities and key associations network for a better integration of young people in the Mediterranean, aiming for a mutual understanding and the strengthening of exchanges towards their inclusion in the institutions, training and work.
- Implementation of concrete projects or initiatives to improve mobility and training of young people in different fields (summer schools Taranto 2018, Kotor 2019).
- Development of the IMC Youth Council, by strengthening and securing its position as Youth dimension of policies dealt with by the IMC. The Youth Council is composed of young Representatives and youth policies regional administrators with the aim of activating participation of the Youth in the democratic life of the countries and regions they belong to, and reinforcing intercultural exchange and cooperation in the Mediterranean.
- Monitoring and contribution to ARLEME activities/report (e.g. report on youth entrepreneurship in 2019/ARLEM Award on youth entrepreneurship 2018/2019/2020 and upcoming ones) and the Commission for sustainable regional development on the topic of promotion of employment and regional development.
- Synergy with other Med networks (MED CITIES, IEMED, AFAEMME, RETE EUROMED, Anna Lindh Foundation, European Youth Parliament…).
- Monitoring of European policies and programmes on employment and social inclusions (such as EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027) considering the Youth Goals proposed by the EU 2018 Conference. These actions will lead to a reflection work on reinforced investments in favour of youth in the structural funds’ implementation, in particular the ESF for the 2014-2020 programming period and upcoming one. Work in synergy with the CPMR Cohesion working group and advocacy actions in the EC are planned.
- Exchange and capitalisation of best practices at EU and regional levels, promotion of actions implemented by the regions (guarantee for young people, development of quality internship opportunities, apprenticeship, work-linked training, policies and financial tools supporting entrepreneurship by young people, work mobility).

In the 2015-2016 period, the Group worked on these components by producing synergies, disseminating key information to members and promoting an exchange of experience, for example in the framework of the territorial seminars organized with UCLG’s MED Commission and partner networks in Sousse, and subsequently within the framework of the FALR in Tangier during the year 2016.

Concerning “Vasco da Gama MED,” the declination of this CPMR political initiative at Mediterranean level is the subject of a dedicated Task Force led by the Veneto region since 2015-2016. The Task Force studied the development possibilities of the initiative for quality training and mobility of the CPMR concerning Sea professions in the context of the Med Basin. It also promoted the elaboration of projects which were submitted to calls from European programs (e.g. ADRION, Blue Careers), as well as other pilots and an idea for a framework project which could be subject to labeling by the UfM (among others by Erasmus+). The Task Force also participated in the final phase of sharing the VdG TGSMT project, promoting a Master in 2015, capitalized through several Summer Schools such as in Taranto (2018) and in Kotor (2019); and the project events or organizations related to its priorities. It also delivered messages for emerging strategies (EUSAIR, West MED, Agenda Economy Blue UfM).

The intention for the future is to continue to work on this aspect by producing concrete actions and projects, in connection with Blue Careers calls, or the Interreg MED communities.

Priority actions for the 2020-2021 mandate:

1. Keep developing the Vasco da Gama CPMR initiative at Mediterranean level by designing “spin off” projects (e.g. BlueStream proposal submitted under EASME Blue Economy call 2019, Summer
1. Schools with EU projects like InnoBlueGrowth and the University of Bari, Interreg MED Communities, etc.) and contributing to CPMR blue skills agenda when relevant;

2. Seek synergies with other linkable initiatives promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean in the context of training, research and mobility and by other networks (e.g. EUROMED +, supported by the Erasmus+ Agency France in connection with Med4Jobs of the Union for the Mediterranean; etc.);

3. Seek synergies with universities, high educational and training Institutes and specialized schools in the context of training and youth mobility seeking agreements and exchanges among young generation;

4. Identification and sharing of transversal exchange and dialogue initiatives / platforms that empower young people and promote coordination between regions (and other actors) for the networking of experiences, optimization of participation of young people and key actors and for maximizing results (as well as improving the intervention schemes designed with young people to promote access to the labor market);

- Implement the activities of the IMC the Youth Council, for example throughout different inaugural conferences in the framework of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, which celebrates a shared history of coexistence and integration in the Mediterranean. When appropriate and relevant, seek and enhance synergies with Member regions’ Youth initiatives and practices (Region Sud, Catalonia…).

5. Development of specific alliances or partnerships with NGOs / Foundations that work on the topic of Med citizenship.

B. Intensify intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between the North and the South

The intensification of intercultural/interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding between the North and the South is a true challenge to be taken into account in the view of a socioeconomic development adapted to cultural realities, more balanced and sustainable. As attested by the Anna Lindh Foundation survey on Euro-Mediterranean Intercultural Trends, values, perceptions, and mutual representation between the two shores of the Mediterranean still differ, and a gap exists “between the achievable and the desired.” Support to cultural institutions and the civil society’s role at a regional and local level is decisive, not only to strengthen intra-Mediterranean cultural links but also to foster mutual understanding between North/South. This involves the respect of cultural diversities, beliefs and religions and a total rejection of ethnocentrism. The objective of creating an intercultural dialogue is to move forward dynamics for mutual recognition, a more inclusive society and a true “cohabitation.”

Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandates:

- Exchange of experiences about the initiatives, measures/laws for the religious and socio-cultural integration in Intermediterranean Commission Regions;

- Partnerships and synergies with euro-Mediterranean networks (Anna Lindh foundation, IEMed - the European Institute for the Mediterranean, Maison de la Méditerranée– on actions in favour of an intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between countries of the Mediterranean basin;

- Political debates to be organised within the framework of the IMC or other events;

- Coordination between all platforms for inclusion and dialogue for youth in the Mediterranean (transversal ref. to point 2A).

In the past, an important part of this type of actions has been developed in connection with the “We are all Mediterranean” Campaign (2014-2015), a few seminars, participation in studies and surveys, the CPMR's

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5 Initiative linked exclusively to mobility aspects of people seeking training, internship, mobility within the company, training center, education/vocational educators in the areas prioritized by the dialogue 5+5, ex. MED NET launched in 2014 by Tuscany, Euro-Mediterranean Youth Meeting 2015 “Social Entrepreneurship and the Collaborative Economy” by Catalonia, “Atelier des jeunes citoyens de la Méditerranée” by Région Sud, others by Occitania etc.
Task Force on migration and the statutory activities of the Intermediterranean Commission. The idea for the future is to evaluate opportunities for new activities in this line and as a contribution to the work that the CPMR TF on migration (and/or external partners including CGLU/ARE/Med Cities/ARLEM) could develop in relation with interculturality and management of diversity (in the internal and external dimensions of migration policy) and the specific deliverables that will be proposed / elaborated.

Another framework of collaboration for this objective could be the Intermediterranean Commission Youth Council as well, as part of the themes addressed by the Youth. Synergies may be also sought with Regions’ practices in terms of Youth, intercultural and/or interreligious dialogue, upon relevance (Andalusia, Region Sud…).

Priority actions in the 2020-2021 mandate:

• Contribute to supporting intercultural dialogue, for example through the CPMR’s Task Force on Migration and link it with actions and reflections on entrepreneurship, diasporas, the Med and youth identity;

• Develop a few ad hoc debate sessions during Intermediterranean Commission events and new partnerships with Mediterranean civil society associations to include the perspective of dialogue in the reflections;

• Include in existing international gatherings of youth from north and the south Mediterranean countries, specific focuses, workshops or work sessions addressed at boosting intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, participation in democratic and employment systems and (more in general) growth, in order to improve the conditions to create more cooperative and dynamic Euro-Mediterranean policy makers in the future.

• Foster intercultural dialogue through the IMC Youth Council activities, counting on the support of Regions’ youth networks from all over the Mediterranean.

C. Promote citizenship and democracy in the Mediterranean towards a common identity

The promotion of citizenship and a common identity for the Mediterranean is a priority in the relaunch of a successful euro-Mediterranean cooperation that takes Mediterranean populations’ real needs into account. Reunite societies, broken by a financial and economic global crisis, conflicts, and who are facing the democratic instability, social inequalities, unemployment, insecurity, migrations and environmental degradation, will only be possible with an effective mobilisation of all basin rims and reinforced euro-Mediterranean relations that integrate civil society and citizens. The political decisions and the countries’ governance must truly be placed in the hands of the citizens through governmental structures whose primary preoccupations are the interest and the will of its populations.

In this sense, as a concrete action to support the sense of belonging to the Mediterranean and a Mediterranean citizenship, the IMC Youth Council could be a relevant instrument to support this work axis.

Besides, synergies will also be sought for this work strand with Regions’ practices such as the Fundación 3 culturas from Andalusia.

Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandate:

• Participation of the chair regions in events that promote citizenship in the Mediterranean, in collaboration with euro-Mediterranean networks (Anna Lindh Foundation, Mediterranean Citizens Assembly Foundation, European youth Forum…);

• Promotion and capitalisation of “media” initiatives for the emergence of a Mediterranean citizenship (reports, conferences, photo competition, exhibitions, videos, debates, radio, workshops, demonstrations, actions to raise awareness that include citizens, media and 2.0 social networks);

• Promotion of the intensification, development and experimentation of high-level actions for citizenship, like the international civilian service (labelling initiative promoted by the regions);
• Promotion of the regional initiatives and decentralised cooperation actions with a view to strengthen local and regional authorities’ skills and capacities, in order to accompany the decentralisation process (in coordination with the Working Group on Territorial Cooperation and Macro-Regional Strategies);
• Development and further implement of the IMC Youth Council, in synergy with existing initiatives when relevant (Region Sud, Catalonía, Andalusia).

Priority actions of the 2020-2021 mandate:

1. Deepen synergies and collaborations with European and Mediterranean networks on specific initiatives addressed to promote and reinforce Euro-Mediterranean citizenship and common Med identity.
2. Develop and implement actions in the framework of the IMC Youth Council, i.e. activate its network of Regions and young people thereof.

3. Fostering a Cohesion Policy that tackles Mediterranean regions’ challenges

A. Contribution to the CPMR rolling analysis on the future of the Cohesion Policy of the EU and promotion of the application of these principles in the Neighbourhood Policy.

The working group will be able to associate itself with the ongoing work of the CPMR carried out by the working group on cohesion policy of the CPMR “Core Group.” This work aims to defend the importance for the regions and improve the effectiveness of cohesion policy over the end of the current programming period and in the post-2020 one. As mentioned above, the European Union has allocated different financial tools to face the socio-economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemics. Two specific actions (REACT-EU and the Just Transition Mechanism) address the issue of cohesion within the Recovery Plan, in addition to the 2021-2027 Regional Development and Cohesion Policy, which consist of five main drivers, towards a “smarter, greener, more connected, more social, and closer to citizens Europe.”

Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandate:

• Monitoring of the Cohesion Policy and working in synergy with the CPMR working group on cohesion (reactions and participation in the group works with a view to presenting a common position or results in debates organized at the General Assembly of the CPMRItermediterranean Commission or Working Group meetings);
• Support the CPMR’s policy advocacy work – with EU institutions and with the EC-DG REGIO in particular (e.g. inclusion of specific Mediterranean messages in the Intermediterranean Commission’s political declarations);
• Follow-up, monitoring and participation to the COVID-19 Recovery Plan reflections and actions at CPMR level and linked to Cohesion Policy;
• Keep promoting the concepts included in the Intermediterranean Commission’s ARLEM 2014 report on “A Cohesion strategy for the Mediterranean” as well as the more recent ARLEM report of 2019 on “Euro-Mediterranean integration: The role of regional and local authorities;”
• Keep promoting the related Intermediterranean Commission policy messages (declarations) that find an application of the principles and methodology of cohesion policy in the context of the EU’s neighborhood policy and the EU Territorial Agenda.

Priority actions for the 2020-2021 term:

• Ad hoc organization of debates on the future of Cohesion Policy, EFSI, ESIF, EIP and various recovery instruments in the framework of the Intermediterranean Commission General Assemblies or other events during the mandate.
• Inclusion of specific recommendations in the Final Declaration of the Intermediterranean Commission General Assemblies and contribution to the positionings of the CPMR on the matter.

B. Support to Macro-regional strategies: the WESTMED Initiative and EUSAIR Strategy
The macro-regional approach is a vector for the implementation of a more effective socioeconomic cohesion, asking private and public stakeholders to better coordinate their actions, to adopt a coherence that is necessary to implement policies and to reinforce the effectiveness of financial tools, multi-level governance and partnerships. The work carried out by the Intermediterranean Commission working group on the “ETC and macro-regional strategies” falls in synergy with the objective of fostering a balanced socioeconomic development in the Mediterranean basin.

**Typology of actions in relation to the previous mandate:**

- Monitoring the reflections carried out within the Intermediterranean Commission “ETC and macro-regional strategies” working group and the related CPMR Task force (i.e. identification of pillars and key initiatives to be capitalised/developed in the framework of social and economic cohesion).

**C. Support to the implementation and lobbying activities of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (MedCoopAlliance)**

Acting for a better consideration and inclusion of local and regional authorities in the governance of the Mediterranean, the MedCoopAlliance has been lobbying territorial cooperation programs in order to occupy a strategic position for the enhanced mainstreaming of projects results on territories.

**Priority actions for the 2020-2021 term:**

- Support the activities of the MedCoopAlliance, while providing a more sectoral approach to the application of its policy messages on the territories, when relevant and necessary.

**V – Organisation**

Since the 2019-2020 mandate, the working group has been co-chaired by Occitanie and Lazio, and they will keep the office also for the 2020-2021 mandate. Both regions will bring their support in the development and validation of works carried out and will coordinate together the group’s activities.

**Specific Task forces** may be created depending on expressed needs and the specific initiatives to be realised that will need a particular work structure in order to guarantee the effectiveness and fluidity in the works’ progress.

Other regions will be able to lead these Task forces coordinated by the working group’s co-presidencies. In the same way, the coordination of certain actions, if necessary, could be put in other specific regions’ hands in order to promote a real effective work division and to have fully shared objectives.

The working group will have to promote the participation of a high number of Intermediterranean Commission members. On each axis and concerned action, the core of the “contributory” regions will have to be identified.

The working group and Task force **meetings** will be organised by taking into account other meetings of the CPMR’s and Intermediterranean Commission’s agendas. It will thus support gathering. The travels and personnel costs will be supported by the participating regions members. Complementary meetings or events could be organised in collaboration with other partner organisations, or within the framework of European project activities.

Finally, in order to support an effective coordination and to follow the works processes, e-mail exchange, online sharing documents, the organisation of short follow-up meetings by phone or **visio-conference** (e.g. GoToMeeting) will be prioritized between the responsible members of the tasks. The priority working languages are **French** and **English**.

The **task sharing** will be done in an effective and transparent manner in conjunction with all members of the group and will take specificities, expertise and each ones’ preferences into account. The group members and the co-presidencies will keep continuous contact with the Intermediterranean Commission.
Secretariat who will bring its support to the logistic organisation, communication and works’ processes. The Presidency will also support this groups’ works development.

**Synergies** between groups or its Task forces can be considered with other Intermediterranean Commission groups (i.e. “Transport and IMP” on the coastal and maritime topics / Vasco da Gama or “ETC and Macro-regional strategies” with the cooperation projects or the reflexions about macro-regions or migrant integration in the framework of the socio-economic development) or CPMR groups (i.e. “CORE group” about the Cohesion policy, the migrations Task force etc.), and with other geographical commissions (i.e. Islands, Balkan Black Sea about the sustainable tourism).

The group’s work will be monitored periodically and reviewed by the Political Bureau or the General Assembly who will evaluate – from the perspective of continuity – how to follow-up on the actions carried out during the previous periods and the possibility to include new fields or lines of work.

**VI – Schedule**

**Key dates for 2020-2021:**

Note: this schedule will be updated during the mandate directly as part of the Intermediterranean Commission’s global calendar, available on the website.

- December 2020 – Online meeting of the Youth Council
- **December 2020-February 2021:** Preparatory meetings of the co-chairs with the Secretariat in order to update the group’s work plan and guidelines
- **26-27 May:** “European Social Economy Summit” (#EUSES) in Mannheim, organised by the European Commission – participation of the co-presidency Occitanie
- **November 2021:** International Conference on Social Innovation (Montpellier)
- Other

**To be added during the mandate:**

- SSE regions Seminars/External partners
- Tourism projects events Intermediterranean Commission
- Events linked to Vasco da Gama
- Conference of Regions or Union for the Mediterranean/ other actors on youth
- “Economic” Weeks of the Mediterranean, Marseille and Barcelona (FR)
- Ventotene week

Schedule to be integrated with the activities (linked to the axis of the plan) organized by the Intermediterranean Commission Regions. The list and information on these activities may be disseminated using the Commission’s website.

**VII – Appendices**

- ToRs Task force “Sustainable Tourism and Culture:” project of lobby actions and projects (in the process of being updated with Crete)
- ToRs/Fiche Task force Vasco da Gama: Document to be updated on Vasco da Gama’s perspectives in the Mediterranean (project to be presented to the UfM) and specific actions such as summer school 2019 VdG Bari, Blue print, Odyssee, and other actions.
- IMC YC –Youth Council Regulations, to be updated according to IMC Regions’ feedback.