GLOBAL ACTION PLAN
2020-2022

Rolling document – version of March 1st 2021

This document constitutes the global programming document for the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission over the 2020-2022 period and the main reference for the Intermediterranean Commission Working Groups planning activities.

Built on the various updates from the working groups, this action plan has been updated in a bottom-up process built on participatory contribution from the Members and following up on the previous actions of the organization as well.

This document will be presented once the WG actions plans have been validated by the Political Bureau of March 1st 2021, in view of a ratification by the General Assembly 2021.
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The Mediterranean basin is a large and complex area, with unique features and a past that makes it the cradle of the Western civilization. Geographically, the Mediterranean is a world in miniature. The Mediterranean is an inland sea which shores encompass every type of terrain and climate – from wild deserts to fertile plains and from islands and minor seas to high mountains. Historically, it has been the meeting place of some of the greatest cultures, the battleground of races and nations, and the focus of three great religions. Beyond doubt the countries around Mediterranean are bound by water, geography, history and culture, and since ages, these countries see the Mediterranean not only as a common sea with valuable resources, but also as a way of communication, interconnection, trade and cooperation. Whether viewed historically, geographically, politically, economically, environmentally or socially, the interactions between countries have always been one of the key features of the Mediterranean basin. They position de facto the Mediterranean as a vital strategic importance. The “Mediterranean issue” thus requires a real sense of responsibility from all Mediterranean countries, EU and non-EU alike. This geographical area, despite the crises and conflicts, is increasingly interdependent, which leaves us with the duty to remove the specter of rejection of others, xenophobia, racism, fundamentalism as well as ethnocentrism.

In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission (IMC) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) 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, programs and synergies in all sectors. To operationalize its vision, the IMC Presidency – ensured by the Sicilian region – proposes to adapt the work axes on the continuation of the previous ones, but also according to the current worldwide situation induced by the pandemic of SARS-CoV-2. From this perspective, the work axes will be developed in the context of the Global Agendas 2030 and Sustainable development goals, the Union for the Mediterranean’s Declarations for the blue economy and various Mediterranean strategies, adding to them the Next Generation EU, Green Deal and revised Neighborhood policy of the European Union.

a) Boosting the blue economy, sustainability and cohesion in the Mediterranean Sea – A change of paradigm for the future of the area

The Mediterranean Sea represents a huge asset for its bordering and insular territories. Source of a positive lifestyle and culture recognized worldwide, it constitutes an environment of socio-economic development for its populations, while being one of the richest areas of the planet in terms of biodiversity.

To safeguard the treasures it contains, one would agree that all its bordering and insular territories should work hand-in-hand to ensure its sustainable socio-economic development, accessibility, improve resource analyses and assessments, observation, monitoring and regulation. Cooperation and mutual understanding are therefore key to ensure a sound management of goods and services, and to develop concrete joint flagship projects.

The current COVID-19 crisis is another element calling for more solidarity, comprehension and cooperation as the socio-economic but also sanitary and environmental stakes are high for the basin. Encompassed in a period of re-designing of the European Union Multi-annual Financial Framework and its proposals for a new “Green Deal”, this crisis calling for more cohesion represents an opportunity for the Mediterranean basin to come again in the spotlight and being a source of inspiration to the world. It is in this framework that I would like to inscribe our next actions with the Intermediterranean Commission.
And indeed, through its various experiences on the global Mediterranean scale, the IMC has in a way already started its reflections and encouraged a path towards a change of paradigm and more sustainable economies. Being one of the founding members and current coordinator of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance has allowed the IMC to widen its cooperation towards an increasing number of Mediterranean territorial actors and networks. These interconnections are presenting the opportunity to shape Mediterranean governance following a multilevel approach, hence closer to its citizens, local and regional territories. This is also demonstrated by its follow-up of the Western Mediterranean maritime initiative as official observer (and founding thinker), involving as well non-EU countries of the Southern Neighborhood, or its activity contributing to the implementation of the EUSAIR and other initiatives focused on Blue Growth, Research and Innovation such as BLUEMED. These experiences have been translating themselves into the IMC’s own claims calling for a future Mediterranean integrated strategy.

Its strong relations with the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, especially on Blue economy issues to support the implementation of its UfM Ministerial Declarations on Climate, Environment and Blue Economy, has allowed the IMC to strengthen its cooperation and positive influence in the area. For example, with the “Med Coasts for Blue Growth” umbrella project, addressing one of the most developed sectors of the basin: sustainable tourism. Besides, this sector constitutes the main focus point of a specific political agenda of the IMC regions, that will need to be further developed after the debates of today.

Following this path, the IMC has been and is still involved in EU projects (Interreg Med, H2020, AMIF) notably dealing with sustainable tourism (Co-Evolve, MITOMED+, DESTIMED+, WINTERMED, and BESTMED & SMARTMED through PANORAMED) and key other strategic themes for the Mediterranean such as the blue economy (InnoBlueGrowth, Blue Growth Community), biodiversity protection (PANACeA, Biodiversity Protection Community), energy efficiency (SHERPA) and water management (SolAqua), or migration through the CPMR dedicated Task force works (REGIN), all the most relevant for our island as well.

In this sense, the IMC should keep capitalizing on these experiences, also nourishing the works of the working groups and task forces at CPMR level, for example on migration and macro-regional strategies. All of these experiences represent indeed a consequent pool of results to be built upon and combined to other expertise acquired through the IMC’s past activities, notably on integrated territorial development and on education. Such synergies would be sought during this mandate as well, and in particular in the light of the latest socio-economic and political developments of the Mediterranean that present themselves as a consequence of the current context introduced earlier.

Moreover, transports and accessibility should also keep high in the scale of priority for synergies and actions of the Mediterranean regions as they are a sine qua non condition for development, sustainability and cohesion of all Mediterranean territories.

b) Mobilizing the Mediterranean Youth as a key enabler for the present and future of the basin

One of the greatest opportunities to reflect and implement this change of paradigm towards more sustainable Mediterranean economies is the Youth. The recent climate strikes embodied by the Youth have given hope and raised awareness to many as regards the future evolution of our Mediterranean Sea and the necessity to take care of it in a sounder way. The European Union’s reflections towards a Green Deal have been first steps towards answering the Youth’s claims and the increasing awareness of countries to move on to innovative schemes for their respective socio-economic models.

Following the wish expressed by the last Political Bureau of the Intermediterranean Commission, I believe that these latest developments are inspiring as to involve the Youth to a further extent in the network’s activities and political reflections. I would therefore support the idea of further developing the activities of the Youth Council of the Intermediterranean Commission. This would indeed allow a closer dialogue with the citizens of tomorrow, ensuring that the wake-up calls launched by the strikers as well as the aftermath
of the COVID-19 crisis on the medium-long terms are tackled in a collaborative and integrated way, forming and involving the future generations to stay the course, be the innovators and thinkers of today and tomorrow.

Furthermore, the various testimonies the IMC has witnessed from the Interreg Med communities clearly call for a reflection on how to adapt maritime sectors and training offers to secure them a future in and for the Mediterranean. Working in this direction is crucial to tackle youth unemployment and lack of professional opportunities, educational quality at all levels, brain drain, conflicts, violence or radicalization, while seeking adaptation to an increasingly digitalized world, and reinforce youth democratic participation and governance in the basin.

Lately, this wish has been gradually answered by the activities carried out in the framework of the IMC’s Economic and Social Cohesion working group. These encompass notably all actions directed to the promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy at EU and Mediterranean levels, as a system capable of valorizing the youth, entrepreneurship, and the Mediterranean identity. In the upcoming mandate, the window of opportunity recently created by the launch of the Intermediterranean Commission’s Youth Council should be fully exploited. Indeed, this Council could constitute a forum to increase youth democratic participation in our debates reflecting on how to build skills and capacities of young people, boost their employability, mobilize them and raise awareness of key Mediterranean issues, promote intercultural understanding, and promote citizenship and the common values we all share that are peace, justice, solidarity, cohesion, sustainability and prosperity.

The IMC should keep promoting these processes in partnership with the most active institutions, organizations and networks in the field of Youth issues at Euro-Mediterranean level such as the Union for the Mediterranean, UniMed, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the European Youth Forum and the like, focusing its efforts on key significative actions.

c) Operationalizing the shift towards sustainable economies through a project-based cooperation in the basin, consolidating alliances and involvement in concrete actions and solid partnerships

As mentioned earlier, the Intermediterranean Commission – 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.

The projects in which the IMC participates as a partner or associate usually greatly contribute to the advocacy activity of the organization, having a positive impact on the membership as a whole (policy papers, technical project results to capitalize, etc.). 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.

In the coming mandate, the Intermediterranean Commission should therefore keep its efforts to pursue, develop and work on concrete projects, providing its members with a hub of exploitable knowledge or potential project partners.

Bearing this mind, it shall also keep working closely with the CPMR General Secretariat and other Geographical Commissions (such as the Islands Commission) on key issues of interest as Territorial Cooperation at EU and basin scale, reflecting on the enlargement of the instruments and programs where the regions of all Mediterranean shores (and our organization) can be directly eligible for partnership and co-funding.
Beyond this dimension, the Intermediterranean Commission should keep enriching its relations with other European, Mediterranean, national and territorial key players (e.g. organizations, universities, research centers, institutes, NGOs, local authorities, thematic networks, national authorities, etc.) that are ways for it to ensure a true, stronger and co-owned impact of its initiatives through projects, agreements or Memoranda of Understanding. Grateful of its already rich network with close collaborations in place with the UfMS, MedCities, Arco Latino, Euro-Regions, UniMed, COPPEM, ASCAME, ARLEM etc., the IMC would keep looking forward to more synergies for political and operational cooperation. For a greater impact of its activities, and answering to the opportunities in front of us, the IMC should keep seeking the increased involvement of southern and eastern partners in its endeavors as well in order to fulfill its real Mediterranean purpose.

II – Working groups activities: Sectorial aspects for Mediterranean regional development

In coherence with this global approach, the IMC will continue positioning itself in key sectoral aspects and policies for the development of the Mediterranean regions with a view to the EU programming period 2021-2027 and beyond.

As mentioned in the last two work plans, in order to increase the impact of IMC, 4 Working Groups have been implementing activities with the support of the IMC Secretariat. This gradual process, started in the mandate 2014-2016, has produced good results like specific initiatives and projects (more than 30 presented to several EU calls, 11 currently running in 2019 with the CPMR IMC as full or associated partner, and others under evaluation or conception), capitalising past experiences, developing new synergies (with CPMR intergroups, external interlocutors/institutions etc.) and increasing both the participation of the members and the impact and efficiency of the IMC action at all levels.

The 4 Working groups, each one co-led by a tandem of Regions, are the followings:

❖ Territorial cooperation & macro-regional strategies (TC & MRs)
❖ Transport & Integrated Maritime Policy (TRAN & IMP)
❖ Water & Energy (W&E)
❖ Economic & Social cohesion (ESC)

Like in the previous mandates, each Working Group has had to draw up a specific Action Plan for 2020-2021. Besides, all the working group should comply with the guidelines approved in 2013 and in particular:

❖ Focus on specific and concrete results (e.g. 2/6) to be reached before the end of the mandate:
  o Advocacy Actions at the EU level (PE, CE, COUNCIL, CDR, CESE, BEI etc.), Euromed (UfM-ARLEM), Multilateral level (United Nations, etc.) which should contribute to the global strategies of the IMC.
  o Projects and other initiatives: pilot projects of cooperation funded with partner resources, seminar, workshops, for a, exchange of best practices, capitalization initiatives, studies, reports, other, Interreg or Euromed projects co-funded by EU programs or other sources.
  o Commit to results monitoring and evaluation in itinere and at the end of the mandate in the framework of the General Assembly and Political Bureau and in relation with their specific Action plans.

The WGs can also embed specific Task Forces (TFs), when it is deemed necessary by the members and in order to reach complex results at political or technical level, on specific topics where a more structured coordination among a reduced number of regions is required. These TFs are coordinated by a region in particular and it is not compulsory or necessary to create TFs for all the subtopics addressed by each WG.

If TFs are constituted within a WG, they have to define Terms of Reference or a similar short document describing the perimeter of their action and the organization and calendar of activities.

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The following parts present the current situation of the IMC Working Groups and Task Forces that will be evolving during the mandate with the valuable contribution of the members. The main issues, themes and topics mentioned per Working Group are merely indicative and as way of summary. A more complete description is available in the IMC activity reports, previous Working Groups’ action plans. The updated and detailed one will be included in the new Working Groups’ action Plans and Task Forces’ ToRs for the mandate 2020-2021.

a) Territorial Cooperation & Macro-regional Strategies

Co-Presidencies: Catalonia and Sud

Main issues, themes and topics that will be addressed by the WG:

❖ Promotion of emerging strategies (Sea Basin / Macro-Regional) and initiatives that could boost multilevel governance in the Mediterranean towards an integrated strategy (e.g. EUSAIR, WEST MED).¹

❖ Contribution to Med Interreg (PANORAMED) and ADRION axes 4, production of reflections, seminars, lobbying meetings and actions etc. Specific support and follow up of the “Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance,” and lobbying to territorial cooperation programs to develop mid-level governance projects, follow-up of AI-NURECC-Initiative etc.

❖ Advocacy and monitoring actions towards the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy, the NDICI over 2021-2027 (contribution to reports, consultations, lobbying meetings etc.).

❖ Efficient coordination with Secretariats and managing authorities of the main Mediterranean cooperation programs and projects implementation (special attention to MED Interreg Horizontal and Strategic projects, ENI CBC MED Strategic projects) and presentation to next calls.

❖ Promotion of actions in the field of Decentralized Cooperation, particularly the replication and conception of new capacity building initiatives on integrated territorial development, support to institutional twinning between Mediterranean local and regional authorities etc.

❖ Monitoring of and general support to decentralization processes in the MED.

❖ Contribution of big and open data to territorial policies and emerging strategies and initiatives (through workshops, projects, advocacy actions etc.)

❖ Foster the coordination with:

❖ ARLEM - Constant participation to the works of the Plenary and the new Commission for sustainable territorial development;

❖ UfM – Continue the implementation of the Memorandum of Understandings;

❖ Other Mediterranean stakeholders networks, including by means of joint cooperation project: Euro-Regions, MedCities, UCLG, COPPEM, ASCAME, CGI, FAL, UNDP, UNEP MAP, Mediterranean Institutes, UNIMED etc.

❖ Support the “Sommet des Deux Rives” (Summit of both rims of the Mediterranean), which will be meeting in Marseille in June 2019 - focusing on key issues including youth, mobility, academic exchange among others- that intends to tighten up the relationships between the Med communities.

b) Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy

Co-Presidencies: Murcia (lead on transport) and Sud (lead on IMP)

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¹ This activity will be developed in coherence with the principles stated in the IMC Road Map on Macroregional and Sea Basin Strategies as in other IMC, ARLEM, EU and UfM political documents and in synergy with other networks and programs of territorial cooperation.
Internal Task Forces: **Bologna Charter** (coordinated by Emilia Romagna), **Follow-up of UfM Blue Economy Agenda at regional level** (coordinated by Lazio), **Fisheries & Aquaculture** (coordinated by Andalusia, may be put in standby).

**Main issues, themes and topics that will be addressed by the WG:**

- Monitoring of the TEN-T and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the implementation/governance of the transport corridors that concern specifically the Mediterranean, the Motorways of the sea (participation in the governance/fora, advocacy DG MOVE, priority projects of the regions…), the RTAP for the Mediterranean basin, support to CPMR works, surveys and policy positions on these issues, in particular in relation with the new Multiannual Financial Framework and regulations 2021-2027, workshops and events…

- Sustainable maritime and multimodal transport integrating the impact on gas emissions effects and air quality in ports (LNG fuel for ships and electrical power supply at the quayside), logistics and goods transport and aviation, low emission zone in the Mediterranean (contribute to CPMR works, events and papers; in connection with the Working Group Water and Energy).

- Development of partnerships and projects in the framework of EU programs that deal with sustainable transport and accessibility issues (e.g. keep supporting CIVITAS and GO-SUMP and its capitalization)

- Support an integrated maritime approach for Blue Growth in the Mediterranean embedding a transversal and sound sustainability/environmental dimension:
  - Monitoring of Integrated Maritime Policy at Med level, maritime governance and Blue Growth topics.
  - Monitoring at Med level of Integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning, adaptation to the climate change in coastal areas and sustainable development of Med coasts: keep promoting the Bologna Charter and its Joint Action Plan at wide Mediterranean level.
  - Biodiversity protection, Clear Harbor and Positive biodiversity Harbor Guidelines, the Ecosystem Approach and use of the seas (Maritime Strategy Framework Directive) and production and management of marine and maritime knowledges and data, including big and open data (via policy monitoring/actions/data sharing platforms-PANACeA etc.)
  - Contribution to the UfM Blue Economy agenda and related initiatives as the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform (Virtual Knowledge Center) or Bluemed initiative on research and innovation.
  - Monitoring and contribution to the maritime dimension of Macro-regional, sea basin, initiatives in the MED, with a special focus on EUSAIR and WestMED.

- Boost specific sub sectors/topics of the Blue Growth / Blue Economy which contribute to the limitation of climate change and its impacts (via specific actions e.g. workshops, studies, projects, advocacy activity):
  - Marine renewable energies, and particularly floating tidal stream generators
  - Marine litter, and particularly the fight against plastic litter in the Mediterranean. And the development of a maritime circular economy,
  - Protection of coastal and marine ecosystems through the development of an Ecosystem Approach of the land-sea interface within policies of coastal planning, the development and networking of marine protected areas as well as ecosystem services performed by nature and the socio-economic value of outstanding natural areas and coastal landscapes. Research, action and implementation of pilot projects of ecological rehabilitation of small coastal seabed of the Mediterranean,
  - Adaptation of coastlines to climate change, and development of solutions based on nature as a tool of resilience of territories. Climate emergency involves furthermore a necessary structuration of stakeholders networks at different territorial scales to develop strategies of sciences-society mediation most closely to the local decision-makers and favouring the participation of Mediterranean citizens. This involves a structural reflection in terms of governance and the implementation of pilot projects and research-action projects,
- Fishing and Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (advocacy, projects, surveys, workshops),
- Employment and training in the sectors of the Blue Economy (via projects linked to Vasco da Gama Initiative),
- Sustainable and Resilient Maritime and Coastal Tourism, limitation of CO\textsubscript{2} emissions and pressures on ecosystems (water, biodiversity), reflections on the carrying capacity of over-visited touristic sites, eco-friendly management of marinas (Clean Harbour Guidelines) and development of ecological mooring areas in synergy with the Working Group on Economic and Social Cohesion (EU projects).

- Monitoring on all European calls for proposals that include a possible maritime dimension: Horizon 2020; Life+; ENI-CBC Med Program; Interreg MED Program; FEAMP and capitalization and development of specific projects on maritime topics.
- Participation in European Maritime Days and other maritime and marine fora.

c) Water & Energy

Co-Presidencies: Generalitat Valenciana (lead on Water) and Rabat Salé Kénitra (lead on Energy & Climate)

Internal Task Forces: Task force on Energy Renovation in Mediterranean Buildings (coordinated by Catalonia), AGRIMED – Agriculture and Food sovereignty in the Mediterranean (coordinated by Region Sud)

Main issues, themes and topics that will be addressed by the WG:

- Monitoring of Water Framework directive - Blue print implementation in the Mediterranean.
- Dissemination and follow-up of political positions on water and energy and exchange of best practices.
- Promotion of innovative and effective water management systems, focusing in particular on the use of renewable energies (e.g. photovoltaic) for reclaimed waters and desalination.
- Development of reflections on other topics connected to alteration of coastal aquatic ecosystems as a consequence of Eutrophication following the use of reclaimed waters or fertilizers, reclaimed water quality control, treatment of ballast water in urban ports etc.
- Participation in forum of discussion on water resources: work with the PE Intergroup on Water, Action Groups EIP, collaboration with other networks.
- Climate adaptation and mitigation issues. Reflections or actions also in relation with Big Data. Spread the of COP and MED COP reflections and conclusions though the Intermediterranean Commission Regions and projects in connection with the agenda 2030 for sustainable development. Synergies with CPMR WG on Climate.
- Global positioning on the Intermediterranean Commission regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy issues also in connection with the debate on emerging strategies.
- Follow up of the Ljubljana Declaration and work within a specific Task Force (open to external key stakeholders) on the elaboration of a Joint Action Plan on Energy Renovation in Med Buildings. Develop the axis defined in the previous mandates within the capitalization of MARIE-ELIHMED-PROFORBIOMED and the Joint Action Plan for the Energy Renovation in Mediterranean Buildings (building it mainly in synergy with the work of SHERPA project).
- Development of synergies with the others IMC Working group and the Islands and the Atlantic Arc Commissions of the CPMR.
- Synergies with Covenant of Mayors against Climate Change (The regions’ role and multi-level governance, ER and EE).
- Energetic efficiency of maritime transports and low CO\textsubscript{2} emissions fuels: LNG, hydrogen (with the WG Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy)
- Monitoring of EU and Euromed programs and calls related to water and energy in order to present projects proposals: Med, ENI CBC MED, H2020.
Other themes dealing with sustainable development (waste treatment, sustainable agriculture, rural development, etc., Nexus: water-energy-food.

**d) Economic & Social Cohesion**

**Co-Presidencies: Occitanie** (lead on Social and Solidarity Economy/Economic related issues) and **Lazio** (lead on Social/Youth Issues)

**Internal Task Forces: Sustainable Tourism and Culture** (coordinated by Crete), **Vasco da Gama** (coordinated by Veneto Region tbc).

**Main issues, themes and topics that will be addressed by the WG:**

- **Social and Solidarity Economy (SEE)**
  - Follow up of IMC prospection report on SEE in the Mediterranean
  - New workshops for exchanging experiences between regions capitalizing the existing tools and instruments
  - Joint Monitoring on ESS related policy activity and funding instruments at EU – Euromed level
  - Advocacy actions towards EU and Euromed-Institutions
  - Partnerships with key players of SSE at MED level and concrete projects.

- **Youth and citizenship**
  - for youth inclusions and participatory democracy: boost Mediterranean networks of sub-national authorities and associations for young people aimed at mutual understanding and strengthening exchanges (as follow up of MED NET launched in 2014 by Tuscany and/or similar actions promoted by the regions and other stakeholders), synergy between initiatives and platforms for youth promoted by IMC Regions.
  - Synergies with Euromed networks as Anna Lindh Foundation and with the Union for the Mediterranean on specific initiatives addressed to youngsters of the Med,
  - Promotion of high-level citizenship actions such as the international voluntary service at Med level and other specific actions to foster the emergence of a Mediterranean Citizenship.
  - Development of intervention schemes designed together with young people to cope with the emergence of youth employment.
  - Advocacy actions and coordination with other networks (e.g. UNIMED) to feed into the current reflection on how to bolster investments for young people when implementing EU funds, particularly the ESF+, Horizon Europe (in relation with R&I) and Erasmus+ post 2020.
  - Exchange of best practices and methodologies existing at European and Med level on: high standard internships and mobility, start-up – Enterprises for young people, work mobility etc.
  - Training, Education, Mobility and Employability in the Blue Economy: actions and projects in connection with Vasco da Gama (CPMR Initiative) and emerging strategies and initiatives (e.g. BLUEMED and WestMED) and calls (Blue Careers).

- **Sustainable Tourism and Culture**
  - Implementation of the IMC Political Agenda on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean with specific actions on coastal and maritime sustainable and culture tourism in the Mediterranean associated to the macro regional and maritime basin strategies or initiatives.
  - Concrete cooperation projects (Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED) with a focus on sustainable and off-season tourism, ICZM and MSP (e.g. in the framework of Co-Evolve and MEDCOAST4BG respectively under Interreg MED and UfM labellization frameworks, in order to enlarge the cooperation area in the south of the Med)
  - Synergies with external stakeholders and the NECSTouR network with the aim to improve the current work on indicators (link with Mitomed +, CO-EVOLVE and HERIT DATA).
Possible new actions connected to the business/ecsysterm services component of sustainable tourism and in particular to ecotourism in protected areas, professional yachting and posidonia protection, underwater heritage, culture heritage promotion.

- Monitoring and contributing to the ARLEM works/reports on socio-economic development aspects.
- Capitalization, monitoring and implementation of specific projects on social and economic cohesion with a specific focus on youth, training, social and solidarity economy, sustainable tourism and new actions concerning big and open data.
- Synergies with CPMR Core Group concerning Cohesion Policy and its impacts and perspectives in the Med.

III – Focus on strategic transversal themes for Mediterranean cooperation

a) Encourage the emergence of macro-regional (MRs) sea-basin (SBs) strategies and other initiatives in the Mediterranean towards an integrated strategy: focus on the promotion of a sustainable blue economy through emerging strategies

The IMC gave a key contribution to the setting up (in 2017) of the maritime initiative for the Western Mediterranean that involves also non-EU countries of the Southern Neighborhood and is active in the implementation of the EUSAIR and other initiatives focused on Blue Growth, Research and Innovation such us BLUEMED.

Moreover, it has developed strong relations with the UfM Secretariat, especially contributing to the works on Blue Economy (BE), becoming observer the UfM Working Group on BE, partner in a specific agreement to support the implementation of the UfM ministerial declaration on BE and consequently directly involved in the organization of the 1st UfM Stakeholder Conference. It has also got the important label of the 43 UfM States to a strategic project dealing with integrated coastal zone management and maritime and coastal tourism: “Med Coast for Blue Growth.”

In addition to this, the IMC is involved in many projects in different sectors linked to the blue economy, some of which are strategic for the future of Mediterranean governance and multilevel dialogue (e.g. PANORAMED) or for the support to decentralization and the capacity building of local and regional authorities in the framework of Integrated Territorial Development (ITD) and sectoral application thereof.

In this sense, the IMC has been continuing its political and practical activities for the promotion and improvement of the blue economy on the one hand, and multilevel governance at Mediterranean scale on the other hand, through emerging initiatives and strategies. It should keep working with an integrated vision of the Mediterranean in the horizon, without forgetting the social wellbeing of Mediterranean Citizens, the sustainable prosperity and the environmental status of the sea basin.

Based on the work carried out in the two previous terms of office in the Intermediterranean Commission (ARLEM Report on a Cohesion Strategy for the MED, Road Map on SBs and MRs etc.) as in the framework of the CPMR Task Force on Macro Regions, and in coherence with the considerations included in the reports of the European Parliament, the EU’s Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, the IMC will:

- Keep promoting and implementing the “Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance” with the major networks of local and regional authorities, Euro-Regions and other key stakeholders in order to keep advocating for the implementation of the Road map on emerging strategies in the Mediterranean and the definition (in the mid-long term) of a possible Macro-Regional Strategy (MRS) integrated or co-ordination mechanism for the whole of the Mediterranean. This setting would result in the
integration of existing (e.g. EUSAIR for the Adriatic-Ionic area, WestMED for the Western Mediterranean) and future strategies and initiatives, complementary to and coherent with each other. These strategies must be designed and developed based on a bottom-up, multi-level governance, multi-actor (public-private) approach, as well as based on the coordination and optimization of the instruments-policies available and the institutions that operate in the area.

- In this sense, it will be necessary to keep linking the work of the Intermediterranean Commission to the EUSAIR Strategy, monitoring it, participating in its governance and developing concrete projects and synergies particularly with the Balkans and Black Sea Commission and the CPMR’s Adriatic Ionian Task Force.

- In this framework it will be also paramount to support and participate in the possible instruments proposed by the European Commission (DG MARE) and the Union for the Mediterranean towards the maritime initiative for the Western Mediterranean that constitutes, with its “Framework for Action” and “Priority Road Map”, a first step towards an integrated maritime initiative in the area (that could encompass in the future also the Eastern area) and contribute to the global UfM Blue Economy Agenda.

- To this extent the IMC and its Regions should better organize in order to get the Mediterranean States “on board” concerning the proposal for the emerging Mediterranean strategies, integration and coordination mechanisms. For instance, they should implement – together with the partners of the Med Cooperation Alliance – concrete advocacy actions at EU Member-State and EU Parliament level (e.g. future Intergroups that will continue the work of SEARICA), in order to promote the technical and financial support to the strategies for the Mediterranean (study phase, governance model, thematic priorities, projects with a specific role for local and regional authorities etc.).

- Keep consolidating the relationship with the Union for the Mediterranean as well as with the European Commission (DEVCO, NEAR), the External Action Service and the European Parliament (Several MEPs, ITGs), to follow in detail and influence the evolution of the debate on the emerging strategies at the heart of these Institutions and in connection with the review and implementation of the Neighborhood Policy and the future Neighborhood Development and Cooperation Instrument.

- Keep articulating the reflection and the action around specific thematic priorities for the emerging strategies with a major impact for the region, coherence and mainstreaming of existing instruments, policies and strategies, aiming for political consensus and planning by objectives, results, instruments and calendar. Particularly relevant are the Territorial Cooperation Programs: Interreg MED, ENI MED CBC, ADRION, IPA, Cross-border, ENI Programs, the EU’s sectoral policies and the EU2020 Strategy, Cohesion Policy, Migration Policy).

- Develop concrete projects/actions or give advice from the regional perspective concerning MRs, SBs and governance to Interreg MED and ADRION axes 4, ENI CBC MED, giving visibility and contributing in particular to the works of the PANORAMED (Interreg MED) project on governance (with a focus on liaising, mainstreaming and innovation) and its strategic projects. These dynamics should keep moving forward over the 2021-2027 period.

- Contribute to Reports on Macro-Regional Strategies to be developed in the future by the EC and to preparatory or support actions of the European Parliament for the start-up or consolidation of the emergent strategies in the Med

- Making the most of the opportunity for interaction presented by the presidencies of the EU Council (Portugal, France…)

- Continue to coordinate with the main Mediterranean institutions - Union for the Mediterranean, Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), UfM Parliamentary Assembly (APUPM), Dialogue 5+5; with regional and local networks such as Med Cities, COPPEM, Med Universities like UNIMED, CGLU among others, and also Mediterranean Think Tanks – fostering a gradual and voluntary co-appropriation/ownership of the concept of macro-regional/sea basin strategy and
agreement of priorities also by the regions and other stakeholders (including the economic actors and those of civil society) from the Southern Mediterranean.

❖ Join efforts to support innovation and research in new emerging and transversal fields like Big Data that should become solid instruments at the services of policy makers and citizens for territorial policies and thus for emerging strategies in all sectors at Mediterranean level.

❖ Considering the running strategies and the territorial needs, Blue Growth and the Biodiversity protection of the Mediterranean will be the focus in the short term for specific joint actions of IMC members.

b) **Integrate, in a cross-cutting fashion, the issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mediterranean Regions’ strategies and policies**

The issue of climate change and its consequences have, in two decades, established themselves at the forefront of international, national and regional concerns. The Mediterranean basin is at the center of these changes and is a hot spot of the globe in respect of the impact of climate change on ecosystems and populations. Indeed, a third of the population of its bordering countries (approximately 150 million people) lives near the sea and 40% of the coastline is now built-on. Climate disruption transpires mainly through an increase of the yearly average temperature of the atmosphere and the sea, a decrease of rivers’ inflows in the sea and of precipitations, saline breaches within groundwater, an acidification of the marine environment, a rise in the level of the Mediterranean Sea and increase of the intensity of natural risks with impacts on coastal erosion and submersion dynamics.

In the face of such situation, one could declare the state of Climate Emergency for the Mediterranean and the next GIEC report, expected in the fall of 2019, could well increase the anxiogenic character of the situation, given that the last projections contemplate a rise of the level of seas up to +190 cm on the horizon of 2100.

The framework of adaptation of Mediterranean coastlines to climate and environmental changes is rather poorly settled. Concrete examples of efficient collaboration between different types of stakeholders at various territorial scales are missing. A lot of actions are based on relatively short projects through which actors only interact within the project’s duration and the cooperation frameworks are not bolstered. Policies of adaptation to climate change seeking territorial planning and infrastructures must take into account the results of scientific research and uncertainties. Nature-based solutions have to be emphasized in the adaptation plans in order to minimize related risks and to maximize the resilience capacity of territories and, eventually, to ease their accessibility for the whole of the stakeholders. Notably, the need to work on the structuration of a network of actors of climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean is salient. To do so, it is necessary to build upon the mobilization and articulation of existing networks or those to be reinforced in the bordering countries, starting with the member states of the European Union.

The IMC-CPMR wishes to play an active role in the backing of strategies and actions aiming at limiting the global warming in keeping with the Paris Accord and the adaptation to climate disruption effects in the Mediterranean. Thus it is about defining and implementing structuring actions increasing the actors’ awareness, skills improvement and cooperation on this issue, as well as the consideration of Mediterranean specificities in European policies and strategies of cooperation with the Northern Shore. A Task Force could be created within the Working Group Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy of the Intermediterranean Commission in 2020 to define a dedicated action plan for the upcoming years, resting particularly on the Bologna Charter and the strategic theme nº4 of its last joint action plan “answers to the issues raised by climate change in the Mediterranean.”
c) Develop a “Mediterranean of projects” and mobilize partners from the non-EU shores of the Mediterranean and especially the South: focus on consolidating the high involvement of the organization and promotion of concrete strategic, pilot projects and solid partnerships

The aim of cooperation through projects, actions and initiatives is, to provide a catalyst that will enable people on both sides of the Mare Nostrum to work together for addressing common challenges, exploiting common opportunities, contributing also to the Mediterranean governance in the long run.

So far, the IMC with its thematic working groups led by its regions, has achieved great results by implementing and supporting projects, that build capacity in the Med area, reduce disparities and promote synergies.

The IMC participates as full or associated partner only in projects that are of strategic relevance with regard to its biannual global action plan and the action plans of its working groups, also in accordance with the CPMR global priorities (see report on projects on the IMC web site). These projects normally contribute also to the advocacy activity of the organization, having a positive impact on the membership as a whole. In addition to this, the IMC provides support to its members (i.e. info notes, partners search, etc.) to build partnerships in fields of interest.

Thus, the IMC and its four thematic working groups, should continue and develop more its actions pursuing and working on concrete projects that lead to the strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Mediterranean region. At the same time the IMC needs to keep working to defend the role and the added value of Territorial Cooperation at EU and basin scale as well as the enlargement of the instruments and programs where the regions of all Mediterranean shores (and our organization) can be directly eligible for partnership and co-funding.

Another important aspect of Med cooperation is the community building and the strengthening of relations with other European, Mediterranean, national and territorial key players (e.g. organizations, universities, centres of research, institutes, NGOs, local authorities, thematic networks, national authorities, etc.). This is facilitated by project-based cooperation and by the establishment of Memorandum of Understandings or Partnership agreements.

So far, IMC has established structured relations with a great variety of key actors in the Med area (such as the UfMS, MedCities, ArcoLatino, UniMed, Euro-Regions etc.), and will continue to pursue the expansion of its network and the establishment of synergies and of political and practical cooperation, while special focus must receive the attraction and active involvement of more partners, stakeholders and potential new members from the non-EU shores of the Mediterranean, and especially from the South. In this sense the IMC project strategy should go hand in hand with the CPMR overall project and new membership strategy.

In the framework of the EU Cohesion and Neighbourhood Policy and of a strategic and integrated approach at sea basin and macro-regional level, the Intermediterranean Commission proposes to develop, in particular, the following activities (also and mostly via its Working Groups):

❖ Advocacy actions at the EU level to keep the balance of the EU budget towards the Mediterranean and the Southern Neighbourhood, with a view to the monitoring of the new EU Neighbourhood Policy and the transnational and cross-border cooperation of the EU in the Med basin in the 2021-2027 programming period.
❖ Keep contributing to future reports on the Neighbourhood Policy and its instrument ENI, possibly produced by the European Parliament and Committee of the Regions etc.
❖ Specific coordination with the MED and ADRION Interreg Programs for Transnational Cooperation as with the ENI CBC MED Program, and IPA programs, participation in call for projects
and implementation/capitalization of all the projects already selected with the IMC and its regions as partners or associates.

- Fostering participation of the IMC together with southern members in projects to be promoted and proposed for **labelling in the framework of the Union of the Mediterranean**.

- **Support to the decentralisation and democratic processes in Southern Mediterranean countries**: monitoring of the situation and coordination with other actors who are working on the issue in the area; boost replication of the pilot IMC CPMR training for local and regional public servants and politicians on integrated territorial development that had a focus on Morocco and Tunisia.

- Possible advocacy actions on the **Europeaid programs** and possible participation in the “**Assises of decentralised Cooperation**” and or EU “development day” as well as in similar initiatives promoted by IMC members in IPA and Mediterranean Partner Countries.

The IMC will also strengthen the multilevel and multi actor collaboration with external partners from academia, public, private, multilateral authorities:

**UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UfM)**: to keep and widen the general collaboration with the UfM initiated in 2013 with an MoU. The cooperation on the Blue Economy Agenda for the Mediterranean will be a theme of special interest, exploiting the opportunity of being observer in the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy and sharing a dedicated agreement with the UfM on this theme. The aim will be to feed the collaboration towards the implementation of the 2015 UfM ministerial declaration on Blue Economy (and the next one), promoting the involvement of the Regions and substantially contributing to the MED Blue Economy forum. The IMC and the UfMS successfully developed an agreement on BE in the period 2017-2018, in this mandate will work on a new specific agreement for the period 2019-2020.

**ARLEM**: through the Presidency of the Intermediterranean Commission, to actively participate in all relevant debates and specific initiatives, especially in the framework of the sustainable territorial development commission, ARLEM seminars and reports in the pipeline. Coordinate with other IMC members participating in the ARLEM.

**MED CITIES**: to continue the collaboration on several aspects of the sustainable territorial integrated development, multilevel governance etc., producing joint lobbying actions and projects in the framework of the MoU signed in 2016.

**ARCO LATINO**: to keep the collaboration on the base of the protocol already in place, to combine efforts in the promotion of joint projects (as MarInA-Med or BleTourMed) and the MRS/SBS for the Mediterranean and to coordinate in the lobby action, particularly in the framework of Interreg programs, West Med, Bluemed, Neighbourhood Policy.

**EURO-REGIONS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA**: launch a collaboration based on joint and specific actions, in particular with the Euroregion Pyrénées Méditerranée (EPM) and the Adriatic-Ionian Euro-Region (AIE).

**UNIMED**: to continue the project-based collaboration and the joint efforts concerning emerging strategies and youth/R&I policies (possible MoU during the mandate).

**NECSTouR**: to continue the project-based collaboration and the joint efforts for sustainable tourism (possible MoU during the mandate).

**MED PAN**: keep collaborating to increase the involvement of the regions in the management of marine protected areas by the setting up of concrete synergies with MED PAN and IMC members and possibly agree on a MoU in 2019-2020.

**UNEP-MAP**: possibly become formal observers in the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) representing regional authorities and continue the good work (project based) with PAP/RAC and other RACs on ICZM matters and sustainable tourism/biodiversity protection.
ASCAME: to keep the public-private sector collaboration, also in the framework of specific projects based on the quadruple helix as the ones already selected in the framework of MED Interreg (e.g. INNOBLUEGROWTH).

CENTER FOR MEDITERRANEAN INTEGRATION (CMI): to refresh the collaboration, implementing the potential synergies identified in the MoU signed in 2015 with this multi-partner platform (World Bank, EU Investment Bank, AFD, GIZ, OCEMO among others) on concrete actions in the framework of sustainable growth, integrated economies and participatory governance concerning MENA countries.

ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION: refresh the collaboration to develop joint initiatives for the emergence of a Mediterranean Citizenship as the main mission of the FAL is bringing together civil society and citizens across the Mediterranean to build trust and improve mutual understanding.

PLATFORMA-Strategic Partnership with the EC: to monitor and interact, when needed, in lobbying activities, research and trainings in matters of decentralised cooperation, development, Sustainable Development Goals, support for decentralisation processes in the Mediterranean and promotion of territorial integrated development.

UNIVERSITY OF BARI: keep the good running cooperation in the framework of the MoU with CPMR on training, education and mobility in the maritime sector linked to Vasco da Gama initiative (projects, summer schools, advocacy activity etc.)

MERCATOR OCEAN – COPERNICUS MARINE SERVICE: develop synergies and possibly trainings for IMC members on how to exploit the marine services/data for regional policies and territorial stakeholders.

Other entities (CGLU, AECTS, UNDP Art, Universities and Centre of Research, ORU Fogar, CNR ISMAR, CONISMA, Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion etc.)

d) Keep strong synergies with the works of the CPMR General Secretariat and its task forces

This goes for all themes of interest to which the IMC can contribute, for example on Youth and training for blue jobs, sustainability, sustainable maritime and coastal tourism and other key themes.

Other aspects for coordination would enter under this axis as well, such as the one with the CPMR Migration TF, seeking to increase the involvement of Regions in the decision-making process regarding the management of migration.

Indeed, regarding the difficulty of EU Bureaucracy and EU and Mediterranean Countries to efficiently respond to the challenges of migration and more specifically refugees, LRAs’ contributions have to be nowadays valued more than ever to stop the tragedies that are happening in the Mediterranean and promote integration processes. Therefore, Regions need to be supported in their efforts to make their voice heard at national, EU and multilateral level as in the implementation of their actions on the ground.

The Intermediterranean Commission together with the CPMR TF on Migration has put a lot of efforts during the past 4 years on lobbying activities, exchange of experiences and projects, in order to help the regions specially to cope with the challenges of the migrant reception and integration. IMC members should keep contributing to these CPMR global works during the current mandate and aiming at reaching, among other things, more assistance and resources to the LRA’s, not only for managing the migration crisis but also for coping with the side effects of the issue. A special focus should be given both to the improvement of the key role of the regions in the promotion of a better management of migration flows and the building of inclusive societies (reception and integration) as well as on their potential and innovative role in the external dimension of migration policies (related to diasporas/resettlement/decentralized cooperation).

Further to that, the IMC will work to strengthen the links and works with the SEARICA Intergroup of the European Parliament, in particular in view of the coming programming period, the evolution of the
European Neighborhood Policy and the recovery period induced by the worldwide pandemic of SARS-CoV-2.

IV – Organization and membership aspects: mobilizing partners from Mediterranean Partner Countries

As regards the logistics and operability of the working group meetings, the IMC should find the most efficient and effective way of organizing the meetings, by minimizing the movement of members. Furthermore, more videoconferences will be organized and mainly using CITs and the Intermediterranean Commission’s website to encourage more fluid communication.

Finally, with a view to the lobbying activity of the working groups, as well as the Intermediterranean Commission and the CPMR in general, it will be useful to keep carrying out studies/inventories of the projects (ENI CBC MED projects, MED program, EIE, etc.) developed by members of the Intermediterranean Commission; and/or brief organic studies for the gathering/systematization of good practices on responsibilities and functions of the Regions. The studies’ outputs could be very useful in order to locate the members’ expertise in a quicker and simpler way, feeding back the contents of the lobby actions of the coming years.

In order to improve its impact, organization, and membership, the IMC will:

❖ **Strengthen the coordination** at the level of the Presidency and Vice-Presidencies, WGs, and also between the Intermediterranean Commission and the CPMR secretariat/Intergroups and Task Forces (e.g. the Presidency, the VPs and the Secretariat will work on a shared repartition of roles concerning the representativeness of the network and the political follow up of topics of special relevance as well as on a monitoring tool for the member involvement in the IMC).

❖ **Develop synergies with other geographical Commissions** of the CPMR and, in particular, with the Islands and Balkans/Black Sea Commissions on tourism matters and, on the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region.

❖ **Be consistent with the CPMR’s “Membership Marketing” strategy**, working to consolidate the membership and achieve **new members, particularly from the Neighborhood South** (Morocco & Tunisia as a top priority, getting closer also to other countries like Algeria etc.), as well as from Croatia and from some regions of the Balkans area as Albania, Montenegro and Turkey. Getting closer to the Mashreq territories (eventually starting with Lebanon). Aiming to recover ex-members and attract new ones in countries that are already members.

To this last extent, the IMC will work during the mandate on an **overall CPMR IMC enlargement strategy in the Mediterranean**. Through this strategy and its daily action, the IMC will work to consolidate as a **priority the cooperation with southern authorities**, in particular:

- Strengthening their involvement within IMC 4 Thematic Working Groups and the governing bodies of the IMC (e.g. keeping a IMC Vice-Presidency for southern countries, giving them responsibilities in Working Groups and Task Forces or specific actions).
- Developing specific partnerships for projects in the framework of EU programs open to the southern authorities (Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED, ERASMUS+, H2020, International Cooperation & Development, among others).
- Influence the EU legislation concerning the participation of southern authorities in EU programs, as necessary.

V – Communication

The IMC will keep improving the definition of the messages according to the targets of internal and external communication of the Intermediterranean Commission (tailored communication), in order to make better use of the instruments and tools made available by the CPMR, whilst contributing to their renewal.
The IMC will in particular:

❖ exploit the new tools at disposal of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (e.g. fully exploit twitter accounts of the Intermediterranean Commission and projects, the projects platforms, the CPMR’s and seasonal IMC newsletters alongside those of projects managed by the organization, YouTube channels and videos) and reflect on the use of social network.

❖ Implement the IMC new communication features (working group banners and colors, variety of pictures displaying Mediterranean diverse territories…).

❖ Improve communication flows through the new CPMR Geographical Commissions integrated website (Articles, news, links…).

❖ Interact with key partners for joint communication towards specific groups of stakeholders (e.g. with the Union for the Mediterranean on Blue Economy and in particular through the Med Blue Economy Platform)

**VI – Calendar 2020-2022**

Detailed Calendar available on the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission website, in the new “TeamUp” format showing events per month, year, category, overlaps with different views.

Main categories of events:

1. CPMR and IMC Statutory Meeting (GA, PB, Plenary, CODIR-Vision Group)
2. IMC and CPMR Working Groups
3. Meetings IMC acts as formal observer (UfM, BlueMed, WestMed)
4. Projects involving CPMR/IMC
5. ARLEM meetings
6. Med Interreg Program
7. Other meetings/Events of the CPMR/IMC partners organizations