

Declaration of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Regions at the Summit of the Two Shores

Marseille (Sud Region), 24 June 2019

The 45 member Regions of the Intermediterranean Commission (IMC) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), gathering for their Annual General Meeting in Marseille on 20 June 2019 and taking the opportunity of the Summit of the Two Shores convened by the French government on 24 June 2019 in Marseille and bringing together the 5 + 5 Mediterranean countries, have wished to adopt the present declaration to be brought to the attention of the States' representatives.

The Mediterranean Sea is not a border, but a natural bridge connecting people from all sides of the sea. As the cradle of Western civilization, the Mediterranean has been a meeting point of the greatest cultures, the battlefield of peoples and nations and the epicentre of three of the main religions. Despite the crises and conflicts facing this geographical area, there remains an undeniable and increasing interdependence between Europe and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.

In this regard, it is our responsibility to address the threats posed by the rejection of others, xenophobia, racism and fundamentalism, in order to consolidate the Mediterranean as an area of peace, security and good governance through education, exchanges and access to employment, especially for women and young people. The Mediterranean is also a fragile area. As an inland sea with coastlines subject to varied climates ranging from wild landscapes to fertile plains, and islands and smaller seas to great mountains, it is now under threat from the climate crisis. This is having particularly strong consequences in the Mediterranean, exacerbating droughts, heat waves, fires, heavy and violent rains, and floods. These effects come on top of pressures related to growing coastal populations and the tourist industry, which is an economic driver with uncontrolled growth. Water resources, fertile lands, fishing stocks and biodiversity are suffering from over-exploitation, pollution, and overflowing waste on land and at sea.

Gathered under the umbrella of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, the Mediterranean Regions have chosen to tackle these challenges through active political dialogue, in order to build synergies and translate them into concrete cooperation actions in all sectors. The adopted positions and the actions of our Regions correspond to the 5 themes addressed in the preparatory forums of the Summit of the Two Shores, together with an additional cross-cutting topic on Mediterranean governance.

Sustainable energy transition

The Regions of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

- Welcome the European Commission's ambitious proposal to devote at least 25% of EU spending to climate objectives. They are concerned, however, that this is not enough to achieve carbon neutrality and limit global warming to 1.5° C by 2050. They argue for greater public and private investment at all levels.
- Stress that the regional level is particularly suited to developing effective climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, since regions are closer to the citizens and more flexible to deliver innovative solutions adapted to their territories' needs.
- Actively participate in European territorial cooperation projects whose recommendations feed into the work of future European directives (like the one on energy efficiency in buildings). These dynamics help to develop policies based on concrete technical knowledge linked to local and regional realities.
- Support the sustainable development of land-based and marine renewable energies, as an economic carbon-free alternative to fossil fuels.

Youth, education, mobility

The Regions of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

- Note that the Mediterranean Regions still have high unemployment rates, especially among young people, and stress the need to improve the employability of young people through stronger cooperation between Regions in the field of higher education and career opportunities.
- Support the development of international youth mobility and ask to extend the Erasmus programme to southern Mediterranean universities and introduce a Mediterranean Erasmus tailored to the common features of our countries.
- To this end, call for greater international recognition of qualifications between European and Mediterranean countries.

Economy and competitiveness – Shared growth and innovation

The Regions of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

- Consider that the blue economy, as the lever of an integrated Mediterranean strategy, is a first step towards broader cooperation in policies related to the three pillars of sustainable development, addressing the fight against climate change and adaptation to its impacts, energy efficiency, water management, social and solidarity economy, and youth policies (education, vocational guidance, training, employability, etc.)

- Note that the European Commission's proposals for the post-2020 budget appear to open up significant funding opportunities for maritime projects. However, these require particular attention and specific implementation of actions in the Mediterranean region.
- Support the development of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) in Europe and the Mediterranean. The SSE is a viable alternative to promote innovative means of production, consumption and funding for a more sustainable, solidarity-based and inclusive development model that can foster youth, entrepreneurship and the Mediterranean identity.

Culture, media, tourism – A new impetus in the Western Mediterranean

The Regions of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

- Reaffirm the messages contained in their declaration on "Promoting sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean regions", which defines current and future regional actions and exploits their capitalised experiences in numerous cooperation projects.
- Affirm the characteristic nature of their tangible and intangible heritage, which when protected and enhanced for cultural and tourist purposes, are a lever for their territories' sustainable development, creating jobs and activities, providing a source of socio-professional integration for young people and promoting a common identity.

Environment and sustainable development – Blue, green and circular economy for sustainable urban coastal development in the Western Mediterranean

The Regions of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission:

- Consider that developing the green and blue economy and tackling climate change are two overriding priorities at EU level, which are especially important for the Mediterranean regions and require a concerted effort on the part of post-2020 European funding policies and programmes.
- Support the declaration on "Ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management" adopted at the end of 2018 by the Mediterranean partners in cooperation projects. They ask for the preservation of land and marine biodiversity, which underpins all human life and activity, to become a "Great Mediterranean Cause". With 28% of endemic species, 7.5% of the world's marine fauna and 18% of its marine flora, the area in which we live and that harbours our civilization is also a crucial area for biodiversity worldwide.
- Support the WestMed initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean (the 5 + 5 countries). Its shared strategic vision and action plan should facilitate funding for concrete projects responding to Mediterranean challenges by jointly mobilising territorial stakeholders, European programmes and national and regional funding.

Strengthening Mediterranean Governance

Finally, the vision of the Mediterranean Regions is based on a deep and demanding partnership with the European Union, its member countries and third countries. To this end, they:

- Ask to be involved in a multi-level governance framework placing them at the heart of the decision-making processes and implementation of decisions on sustainable socio-economic development, climate change, migration or other such key issues.
- Call on the EU to continue strengthening its relations with Mediterranean partner countries through an effective and open neighbourhood policy. Local and regional authorities are often at the forefront when it comes to addressing the impacts of many European and Mediterranean challenges.
- Fully support the Cohesion Alliance initiative launched in October 2017 by the European Committee of the Regions together with several European associations of cities and regions, which calls for a stronger and more visible EU cohesion policy after 2020.
- Recall that they are signatories of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance adopted in Barcelona on 4 February 2019 by several regional and local government associations, to "Face together common challenges and integrate strategies for a better and sustainable future". They invite more stakeholders to join them to promote greater cohesion in the Mediterranean.
