Final Declaration
30th Anniversary
CPMR Intermediterranean Commission
General Assembly

June 9-10, 2022 – Sevilla (Andalucía)

15 key recommendations
for a Cooperative and Sustainable Mediterranean

This document constitutes the Final Declaration
that will be presented for approval by the General Assembly of
the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission,
meeting in Seville on 09-10 June 2022

Three years after the last on-site IMC General Assembly, we are recovering these days, on June 09-10, 2022, a way of relating to each other that is connected with the Mediterranean soul and way of life. Following three years of pandemic that had postponed the celebrations of the Intermediterranean Commission’s 30th Anniversary, we gather today in Andalusia again, a Region that was already present at the genesis of the IMC’s constitution. Andalusia now takes up the torch at the beginning of this new post-COVID-19 era, hosting this long-awaited meeting between representatives of regions, disparate in appearance, although converging in essence, from the different shores of the Mediterranean, which contributes to uniting their peoples, building bridges between them for the forging of shared identities.

This Declaration has been drafted in the context of the current post-pandemic economic and social regeneration, and the global instability linked to the armed invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It is intended as a contribution by the CPMR’s Intermediterranean Commission to the current challenges of socio-economic recovery and the acceleration of the green and digital transition initiated by the European Union.

Its references are based on the late and current Mediterranean state-of-the-art regarding the following issues, as well as on the previous and current CPMR General Secretariat’s and CPMR Intermediterranean Commission’s works, including those of partner institutions, networks and programmes.

Far from claiming to be exhaustive, the Declaration is structured around key themes related to current opportunities and challenges linked to governance, climate change, biodiversity protection, migration, global sustainability, the blue economy, connectivity and the youth.
The context of current reflections seems to be drawing the outcome of two long years of uncertainty and adaptation related to the emergence of the sanitary crisis induced by the SARS CoV-2. This crisis has challenged our socio-economic ecosystems and lifestyles, inducing a paradigm shift guided by an ecological, social, technological and digital transition. Ready to respond to its sustainability challenges, Europe is nevertheless now facing a new crisis, this time putting the endurance of democracy and freedom of societies on the European continent to a severe test.

In this complex global context, local and regional authorities are once again on the front line, having to take on, among other things, the reception of war refugees. This instability comes on top of the alarming climatic issues that have already been observed for years and accentuates the need to accelerate the transition of consumption patterns towards systems that are less dependent on fossil fuels, in this case gas coming from and through Russia.

The difficult socio-economic recovery linked to the heavy repercussions of the health crisis and now suffering from skyrocketing energy prices, raw materials such as wheat, oil, coal and aluminum due to the blocking of exports linked to the invasion of Ukraine, shows us the extent to which globalization has made us dependent on one another. This also shows our dependency on perishable resources. This interdependence, which in another societal context proved to be indispensable, has now reached its limit and invites us to further reflect on our production and consumption modes, which should be turned towards more local ecosystems hence more sustainable.

Today more than ever, it is time for solidarity and cooperation for a greener, more innovative, and safer Europe and Mediterranean. Particularly affected by migratory flows linked to other geopolitical crises, but also to the impact of global warming, Mediterranean Regions must now promote themselves as laboratories for integration and peace, sustainability and innovation. They have everything to gain by pursuing their cooperation on common issues such as the blue economy, green energies development, the implementation of a macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean basin, the protection and restoration of biodiversity, and fight against desertification.

With a view to a “Cooperative and Sustainable Mediterranean” and building on its previous declarations, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, addressing European, Mediterranean and international institutions, as well as national and sub-state entities and stakeholders in the Mediterranean, hereby:

1. **Underlines** that the current global instability linked to the invasion of Ukraine proves once again the crucial role played by local and regional authorities in showing solidarity by taking in refugees fleeing from war on an emergency basis. Once more, this legitimizes the importance of involving Regions in solidarity mechanisms, in decision-making to manage migration crises, but also to deal with its side effects, such as the food products supply crisis in Africa, which in the short and medium term can lead to a social crisis with an increase in migration on the Mediterranean coasts. In this context, the Intermediterranean Commission will continue to support the CPMR’s Migration Task Force and its activities in representing interests and exchanging experiences and projects, building on the important experience of Mediterranean Regions in dealing with migratory flows, in order to help Regions face the challenges posed by the reception and integration of refugees and migrants. This is specifically important for Regions under pressure and those with an external border, many of which are responsible for the provision of basic public services aimed at the care of these people, as in the case of unaccompanied foreign minors. The IMC reiterates the need for a coordinated approach by the EU and States for the development of a common asylum and migration policy, as well as sufficient financial support mechanisms.

2. In parallel, in line with its works and that of its Members on the development of renewable/clean energy, the Intermediterranean Commission is **attentive** to efforts to make Europe independent of Russian fossil fuels and **supports** the EU in its work to strengthen this strategic autonomy through the REPowerEU initiative “Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy” launched in 1 Barcelona 2013, Patras 2014, Venice 2014, Marseilles 2014, Nafplio and Rabat 2015, Venice 2016, Barcelona 2017, Naples 2017, Patras 2018, Marseilles 2019, Online 2020, Online 2021.
March 2022. In relation to climate change, economic and financial policies are an important lever to support, promote and accelerate the ecological transition of Mediterranean Regions. To this end, the IMC advocates for the strengthening of an environmental perspective in budget formulation with the aim of better aligning budgetary policies with environmental objectives. Likewise, in the context of the war against Ukraine, it also calls for continued efforts to achieve the EU’s sustainable food objectives without undermining food sovereignty, especially for the most vulnerable regions.

3. **Calls on** European Institutions and Mediterranean Partners to strengthen the (political) ownership of the strategies at all governance levels, and in particular to increase the involvement of regional authorities in the governing bodies of all strategies. For the sake of coherence, this ownership must also be ensured and maintained at the level of the steering of flagship cooperation programs such as Interreg, key priorities and actions, such as the National Recovery Plans or the above-mentioned solidarity mechanisms. Indeed, because of their proximity to territories, citizens and related issues, Regions must be able to participate in strategic decisions taken at global political level in a more structured way.

4. **Remains attentive** to the progress made in the development of both the Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the WestMED initiative, and believes that stable cooperation and more synergies should be created between these initiatives in order to give coordinated responses to similar objectives, challenges and solutions.

4a. **Calls for the strengthening** of the process to establish a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy. This Mediterranean macro-regional strategy should promote a stable institutional cooperation framework that favours the maintenance of a permanent dialogue on issues of common interest in the cross-border, transnational and neighbourhood field. This effort should build on the work of leading platforms such as the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (MedCoopAlliance) and count on the support of key institutions such as the European Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, the French and Spanish presidencies of the EU Council and the Union for the Mediterranean. Multilateral dialogue *fora*, such as the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation, in which entities from the three shores of the Mediterranean participate, are also an important tool in this process. In this respect, the coherence with the macro-regional vision in the new governance dimension of the EuroMED and NextMED 2021-2027 programs is particularly relevant.

4b. **Supports** the CPMR Islands Commission in its objective of advancing in an EU Pact of Islands declined by basins that establishes the foundations of a future EU Island Agenda. As a consequence of its territorial discontinuity, an island impact assessment is essential when drawing up any policy at a European level with the aim of overcoming the combination of multiple and permanent structural handicaps affecting those territories (such as small size, discontinuity (archipelagos), awkward connectivity, limited natural resources, fragile ecosystems or vulnerable socioeconomic and cultural realities) and improve the territorial cohesion of Mediterranean islands within the basin.

5. **Is concerned** about the delays in the adoption of the 2021-2027 Partnership and Programme Agreements induced by the delay in the European legislative process, the deployment of the Recovery and Resilience Instrument, the programming and implementation of additional funds from REACT-EU, and the impact that this could have on Mediterranean territories. Indeed, there is an urgent need to start implementing the programmes, even more so as delays in implementation could be exploited by critics of the Cohesion Policy to argue for a reduction in its future budget in favor of other spending programmes. Furthermore,

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2 REPowerEU_ Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy.pdf
3 The Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation’s headquarter hosted the IMC’s 2022 General Assembly.
4 MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the start-up of implementation of cohesion policy for 2021-2027 (europa.eu); Policy Brief - Delays (FMNB)8464[30] (cpmr.org)
the economic risks linked to the fallout of the war against Ukraine may also require adjustments to programmes in the medium term, thus generating additional administrative burden. In this sense, it would be appropriate to request an extension of the 2014-2020 eligibility period provided for in the art. 65 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of December 17, 2013, for a period of not less than 6 months, at least, in coherence with the provisions of art. 87.1 b) of said Regulation. We therefore call on the Commission to explore additional avenues for simplification in relation to the implementation of 2021-2027 cohesion policy.

6. **Reiterates**, as per its reaction to the Communication from the European Commission and the High Representative on a “Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighborhood. A new agenda for the Mediterranean”, the importance of multi-level governance, the need to strengthen the sustainable blue economy dimension within the European Neighborhood Policy, in synergy with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the EU Green Deal, the Union for the Mediterranean’s Declaration on the Blue Economy, as well as cooperation programmes already addressing this theme or planning to do so. Sustainable blue economy should be developed in the context of integrated coastal zone management in the Mediterranean, taking as guiding principles the precautionary principle and the application of an ecosystem-based approach.

7. **Keeps promoting** the policy recommendations developed in the framework of the Interreg MED WINTER MED project for a transition from the current highly seasonal tourism activity in the Mediterranean island destinations to an alternative, sustainable and year-round use of the territories approved by its members in the framework of the Political Bureau of 9 February 2022. Among the 9 policy recommendations of the document, States are invited to consider the transformation of the tourism sector as an integral component of their national development and recovery plans, make available the necessary funding to that end, promote interconnections between tourism and other industries, strengthen collaboration, digitalization of tourism and education, with a specific attention to insular territories.

8. **Strongly emphasizes** the need to increase capacity building workshops for territorial and political actors, especially with a view to adapting to new challenges related to health crises and climate change. In this sense, it welcomes the publication of the new manual on “Social and economic regeneration of tourism in the Mediterranean after the SARS-CoV-2 crisis”, jointly developed with the Union for the Mediterranean. Capitalizing on a previous experience related to integrated territorial development, this manual is intended to be operational and is used in particular in the framework of capacity building workshops in connection with the Intermediterranean Commission’s cooperation projects. This way, it puts into perspective the implementation of practical tools, for example for the revival of Mediterranean tourism in a sustainable way.

9. **Underlines** its commitment to the development of the Interreg MED Academy, which objective is to raise awareness, inform and train students and professionals based on the results of cooperation projects.
related to different themes of the Interreg MED programme. These areas of study are all closely or remotely related to the current European and global political contexts, and in particular to the definition of common solutions to slow down global warming while continuing to promote sustainable and respectful development of economies and peoples over Mediterranean territories.

10. **Is satisfied** by the inclusion of the ports of Sète and Civitavecchia in the core network, following its active participation in the negotiations on the revision of the regulation on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). It **invites** the European Commission to consider the inclusion of the other amendments suggested by the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission among others (only 6 out of 13 were considered), knowing that the cost of implementing missing links would be largely offset by the positive socio-economic impact on the territories in question. The Intermediterranean Commission recommends the integration of more qualitative criteria, particularly with regards to the energy transition, in the future TEN-T regulation and thus allowing the integration of strategic ports in the global network. In addition, it considers essential to carry out an identification of pending actions in the field of investments and of overcoming technical obstacles, that would give a greater socio-economic return to affected territories, as well as an estimate of the negative consequences of their delays. These results must be made available to the Coordinators for further use. The Intermediterranean Commission **also calls** for greater simplification between the various funds made available, especially those related to energy transition, and stresses the need to reduce administrative barriers for effective and sound governance of the TEN-T.

11. **Welcomes** the latest initiatives undertaken by the EU, in particular the start of the co-creation processes of the transition pathway that has been launched following the European Commission’s review of the industrial strategy (May 2021). This review ensures that the European industrial ambition takes into account the circumstances following the SARS-CoV-2 crisis, while ensuring that industry can lead the way in the transition to a green, digital and resilient economy. It is pleased, among other things, to have taken part in the development of the transition process related to tourism, an ecosystem particularly impacted by the health crisis and in which the Intermediterranean Commission is particularly active.

12. **Highlights** its involvement in the implementation of the Ocean Mission “Restore our oceans and waters by 2030” launched by the European Commission. The Intermediterranean Commission will **closely monitor** the implementation of the PREP4BLUE Coordination Support Action (CSA) in which the CPMR is a partner, an umbrella initiative preparing the ground for the landing of “lighthouse” projects in each of the European sea basins. It will also follow the Mediterranean Lighthouse project, which aims to reduce plastic pollution, by working to mobilize its members towards cooperation on this issue over the land-sea interface.

13. **Is proud** of the development of the Mediterranean Youth Council (MYC)’s activities and can only underline their relevance to strengthen the Mediterranean regional democracy effort. The MYC aims to increase the participation of young people in the debates of the Intermediterranean Commission on the main

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10 Interreg Euro-MED Academy ([interreg-euro-med-academy.eu](http://interreg-euro-med-academy.eu)) was launched in January 2022. The Intermediterranean Commission is notably in charge of developing a learning program entitled “Funding cooperation mechanisms and opportunities for a sustainable Mediterranean” (in English). It also participates in other modules, particularly in relation to blue growth, where it is developing a chapter on sustainable maritime and coastal tourism in the Mediterranean.


12 See conclusions of the IMC meeting “Mediterranean Views on the TEN-T” of April 2022 (in English).


14 All the projects in which the Intermediterranean Commission is involved have been highlighted as good practices in the CPMR’s response to the EC’s consultation for the development of the transition process for tourism.

15 Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030 - Communication on Missions is published! (europa.eu)

16 The Mediterranean Youth Council is coordinated by the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission in collaboration with the association Les Têtes de l’Art, the Lazio Region and the Sud Region.
Mediterranean issues in a mutual learning dynamic. On a sustainable level, these exchanges contribute to intercultural dialogue, the promotion of the Mediterranean citizenship and of the common values we all share, namely peace, justice, solidarity, cohesion, sustainability and prosperity.

14. **Acknowledges** the latest European Commission’s Communication on the EU Solar Energy Strategy linked to the REPowerEU plan\(^\text{17}\) and is hoping for a more transversal approach in the future to be coupled with water issues, notably irrigation. In this sense, **reminds of** its contribution to the deployment of photovoltaic irrigation for the transition to greener energies and agriculture, as part of its participation in the H2020 SolaQua project.\(^\text{18}\) The Intermediterranean Commission **encourages** managing authorities in charge of rural development plans to learn about existing legislative good practices for the assimilation of photovoltaics for agricultural irrigation and to use appropriate financial instruments to that end, helping the reduction of irrigation costs and of its carbon footprint.

15. **Happily supports** the *Mediterranean Awards* initiative launched by Andalusia to promote good practices and actors of cooperation in relation to the implementation of the aforementioned “New Agenda for a Renewed Southern Partnership.”\(^\text{19}\) The Intermediterranean Commission is convinced that this type of initiative will put the importance of cooperation and solidarity back in the spotlight and will give a positive note to these times marked by intense challenges which, as such, can only be effectively addressed through coordinated actions.

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18 About • SolaQua (sol-aqua.eu)
19 Mediterranean Awards – CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (cpmr-intermed.org) Digital Award, Green Award, Women’s Award, Solidarity Award and Identity Award and, on the other hand, the category of *Ad Personam* Awards which includes the Mediterranean Award of the Year.

Le rassemblement des Régions membres de la Commission Interméditerranéenne représente un lien de paix, de stabilité et de développement entre trois continents,

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