



MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION ALLIANCE

#MedCooperationAlliance

“Facing together common challenges and integrating strategies for a better and sustainable future”

Barcelona - 4 February 2019

We, the regions of the **Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR**, the **Euro-Région Pyrénées-Méditerranée**, the **Adriatic Ionian Euroregion** and the networks of local authorities **Med Cities** and **Arco Latino**, gathered in Barcelona on 4/2/2019 to reflect about the **future of the cooperation in the Mediterranean Region, towards a joint long-term strategy for the sustainable and integrated territorial development of the basin**, decided to launch the **“Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance”** *#MedCooperationAlliance*.

The *#MedCooperationAlliance* is a coalition that believes in multilevel governance and Mediterranean cooperation, as fundamental drivers for ensuring a better future for the populations from the Mediterranean and the European Union. The Alliance was created through collaboration between the leading Mediterranean associations of Regional and Local Authorities and two Euro-Regions. This alliance, which is open to the support and participation of other key territorial actors and institutions, **demands that the EU and Euro-Mediterranean Institutions after 2020 -with the horizon of the two next programming periods-**, the African Union, United Nations, other international organisations and institutions acting in the Mediterranean region, work harder towards the **integration of emerging sea basin, macro-regional strategies and other connected initiatives and cooperation instruments**, in order to build a **common, more cohesive and co-owned Mediterranean macro-region**.

From national, regional and local governments, to NGOs, universities, international organizations and private sector, **anyone who share this open governance and integrated cooperation approach in the Mediterranean is welcome to join the #MedCooperationAlliance** by signing the Declaration (on behalf of the organization or in personal capacity). The entities endorsing the alliance and its declaration will promote joint actions to pursue its aims.

#MedCooperationAlliance - Preamble & Declaration

“Facing together common challenges and integrating strategies for a better & sustainable future for all”

We, the signatories of the coalition #MedCooperationAlliance

1. RECALLING The ARLEM Report on a “Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean” (2014) and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission [“Road map towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies in the Mediterranean”](#) (2014) as well as the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Declarations of Venice (2016), Naples (2017) and Patras (2018), CPMR Intermediterranean Commission positions on the future of territorial cooperation in the post 2020 and the CPMR Final Declaration of Madeira (2018);

2. OBSERVING that the Mediterranean region is today recognized as the second largest Global Biodiversity Hotspot, encompassing both the terrestrial and marine environments, being at the same time heavily threatened by climate change, habitat degradation and loss as a result of unsustainable human activities including the overexploitation of natural resources and the soil artificialisation. This is exacerbated by increasing pollution, unsustainable fisheries and extreme climatic phenomena, such as increases in temperature and sea level rise;

3. ACKNOWLEDGING the richness of culture and common heritage of the Mediterranean citizens, people and territories at all levels and at the same time the common challenges concerning all aspects connected to environment (preservation of biodiversity, surroundings and access to water), energy efficiency and climate change; human mobility, accessibility and transport; blue and green growth (among which marine renewable energies); socio-economic cohesion; the potential of sustainable tourism (attractive, smart, sustainable and inclusive destinations); education, skills and jobs, in particular for women and younger generations; as well as the islands specificities and inland rural and less populated areas;

4. WARNING about the need to consolidate the Mediterranean as an area of peace, security and good governance for its citizenship capable of overcoming also geo-political conflicts and tensions and terrorism related challenges;

5. RECOGNIZING the key role of the Local and Regional authorities as drivers for integrated territorial development and in the Mediterranean cooperation and, as the closest level of government to the citizens and key players towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of global agendas as the Paris Agreements or the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III);

6. CELEBRATING the positive results of the increased cooperation they were able to trigger via their networks, as well as through the Committee of the Regions, the ARLEM (Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly), GECTs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) and the existing EU programmes for territorial cooperation - e.g. Interreg MED (Programme cofinanced by the European Regional Development Fund), CBC (Cross-Border Cooperation), IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and ENPI CBC MED (European Neighbourhood Instrument, cross-border cooperation in the Mediterranean), and emerging initiatives in the Mediterranean;

7. WELCOMING the advancement of EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) promoting concrete projects and initiatives like the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities ([AI-NURECC](#)) and the very positive steps forwards of WestMED Maritime Initiative, which adopted on 4 December 2018 a road map identifying six joint action priorities ¹;

8. APPRECIATING the great step forwards made by the BLUEMED initiative for Research & Innovation in the Mediterranean Blue Economy, that has updated its SRIA (Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda) and is moving towards an implementation plan, involving all Mediterranean countries and by the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), which is supporting actions aimed at developing innovative and sustainable solutions in agriculture, food production and water provision, encouraging application by communities, enterprises and citizens;

9. RECOGNIZING the strengthened role and increased efforts for human and sustainable development made by the Union for the Mediterranean and in particular the UfM ministerial declarations on Environment and Climate (2014) and on Blue Economy (2015) and the UfM Urban Agenda (2017);

10. WELCOMING the action of the UNEP MAP through the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and of the Centre for Mediterranean Integration, addressing youth, education, innovation, employability, refugees & mobility, climate change and territorial cohesion and urban development;

11. STRESSING that nevertheless, much has still to be done for integrating to a higher extent the strategies, instruments and key players to foster concrete projects aiming to face with more efficacy and impact the complex common challenges of the basin from the socio-economic, environmental and geo politic point of view;

12. CONSIDERING that the forthcoming EU elections, despite Brexit and the financial situation, shall be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation spirit: a stronger Mediterranean, can be the positive engine for Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and the World;

13. UNDERLINING that the EU Commission proposals in particular concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework are not enough ambitious, especially on the envelopes concerning Territorial Cooperation and the Mediterranean;

14. MANIFESTING that the pro-activity and initiative of Mediterranean actors at all levels is a very positive aspect, but needs to be better coordinated, as too much dispersion may lead to dilute efforts. And that we need to bridge in a more integrated way all the shores of the basin to be more cohesive, increase the weight of the area at EU and world level as well as its potential to innovate (e.g. through new technologies and new skills and jobs, use of big/open data for territorial policies and value chains etc.) and contribute to the wellbeing of the citizens and the environment;

¹ Maritime activity hubs, biodiversity and the conservation of marine habitats, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable fishing and aquaculture in coastal communities, skills mobility, and maritime security and the fight against marine pollution

Seal the #MedCooperationAlliance for the Sustainable, integrated and cohesive development of the Mediterranean and declare that:

The European Union, the African Union, and other international organisations and institutions acting in the Mediterranean region shall

1. Bring all emerging **Mediterranean strategies and initiatives** like EUSAIR, WestMED and BLUEMED, among others, to **operational application** while ensuring and increasing **opportunities** (e.g. access to funding, tools and capacity building) and the direct **involvement** in concrete actions for local, regional authorities and territorial public and private stakeholders, fully unveiling their cooperation potential.
2. Foresee more **flexibility** for EUSAIR, when it comes to the approach based on the 3 no rule (especially funding) and evaluate the **setting-up of a basin strategy complementary to the EUSAIR and WestMED initiative** for the Eastern part of the Mediterranean (either the extension of West MED), which does not count still on a solid strategic sea basin cooperation framework.
3. Further promote the **strengthening, alignment and integration of all the relevant strategies and initiatives** capable of reinforcing **multilevel governance** and **cooperation**, towards a **unique integrated long-term strategy for the Mediterranean** or at least a solid coordination mechanism (not necessarily based on a governing board) that could see the light in the decade after 2020.
4. Consider that **Blue Economy can be a perfect driver to build an Integrated strategy at Mediterranean level**, but that it shall be only the first step towards a **wider cooperation of policies connected to the three pillars of sustainable development** - e.g. fight against climate change and adaptation to its impacts; energy efficiency; water management; social and solidarity economy; youth policies, in particular education, training, vocational guidance and employability in other sectors, among others).
5. **Build this long-term integrated strategy** for a better, cohesive and sustainable development in the Mediterranean **on a set of principles** and approaches including: the **gradual co-ownership by all Mediterranean countries and actors involved at territorial level** and the **variable geometry approach** concerning the specific strategies and initiatives to be integrated.
6. **“Territorialize” the neighbourhood relationship and policy** between Europe, Africa and Middle East, in particular when it comes to new instruments such as the future **Neighbourhood Development International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**.
7. **Foresee a more ambitious budget and instruments** adapted to the key challenges of the Mediterranean and to the needs of its countries, territories and citizens.
8. **Maintain the cross-border maritime cooperation in the architecture of Interreg, by ensuring the continuation of programs of cooperation with strong and consolidated background**, boost the **transnational component**, and shape the **geography of future territorial cooperation programmes** considering especially the needs of the territories, foreseeing solid mechanisms for **synergies between EU programmes**, increasing the **direct involvement in projects of actors from non-EU Med countries**.
9. Promote **the creation of a platform of national and international donors** working in the Mediterranean region, especially in the southern and eastern ring, to improve the coordination of strategies, programmes and actions dealing specifically with regional and local governments.
10. Reinforce and **support other financial initiatives of the European Union** that foster the **capacity building of the local and regional governments of the Mediterranean** through pilot projects and networking activities (i.e. The International Urban Cooperation, The Partnership for sustainable cities or the Urbact programmes).

The signatories of the #MedCooperationAlliance coalition will:

1. Give their contribution towards a more integrated and cohesive Mediterranean, **by fostering synergies between the key initiatives that are leading²** (e.g. on Integrated Coastal Zone Management and sustainable development of Mediterranean coasts, education and training in the maritime sector, sustainable tourism—especially attractive, smart, sustainable and inclusive destinations, energy efficiency and fight against climate change, among other themes) **and the wider strategies existing at Mediterranean level led** by the Regions, the countries, the European Union the African Union, the Union for the Mediterranean, other international organisations and institutions acting in the Mediterranean;
2. Endorse **further initiatives, actions or projects aiming to enrich the social, economic and territorial integration of the region** in fields such as Mediterranean citizenship, public governance, gender equality, youth, cultural minorities respect, environmental issues and climate change;
3. Strongly **support the cooperation at political, technical and project level between regional and local actors of EU, IPA and non-EU Mediterranean partner countries** as well as among all the components of the **four helix**: public and private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations/civil society.
4. Consider **insularity as an essential element in the future strategy of the Alliance**, advocating for the recognition of the difficulties and handicaps of insular territories within the framework of actions and programs implemented at Mediterranean level (especially in the field of transport, with regard to European instruments such as the European TEN-T transport network and the “Motorways of the Sea”).
5. Commit to **structure** in the years to come – possibly with the support of the EU and Euro-Mediterranean Institutions - a **solid and operational multi-level and multi-actor network of key stakeholders** that could:
 - **Improve the implementation** of the existing **Mediterranean strategies and initiatives to act in a more integrated way** in the long run;
 - **Jointly conceive and develop pilot projects and programs** involving the regional and local stakeholders and in particular the promoters of this alliance.
 - Endorse the **Policy positions produced by the Interreg MED Thematic Communities**, so that their messages, developed from projects’ results, can have a major impact on policies at all levels, namely the **“Athens Declaration”** of the Sustainable Tourism Community and the **“PANACeA Declaration”** on Ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management. The Alliance will also evaluate the possibility to endorse the future policy positions that will arise from the Sustainable Tourism and Blue Growth communities of Interreg MED in 2019.

² Such as the “Bologna Charter” for sustainable development of coastal areas, “Vasco da Gama” for training and mobility in the maritime sector, “AI-NURECC”, the “Political agenda of the Mediterranean Regions on Sustainable Tourism”, or the forthcoming “SHERPA Joint Action Plan for energy efficiency in Mediterranean buildings”.

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SIGNATORIES

Apostolos KATSIFARAS

President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission
and Governor of the Region Dytiki Ellada

Francesca LLUCH ARMENGOL I SOCIAS

President of the Euroregion Pyrénées Méditerranée
President of the Balearic Islands Government

Joan Josep MALRÀS I PASCUAL

President of Arco Latino

Xavier TIANA

Secretary General
on behalf of the President
of MedCités

Francesco COCCO

Secretary General
on behalf of the President
of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion