



04 JANUARY 2010

## POLICY POSITION OF THE CPMR INTERMEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION

### OPINION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*(to be approved via written consultation between 4 and 14 January 2010)*

# CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSULTATION ON FUTURE EU 2020 STRATEGY

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1. The member regions of the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) are very pleased that this consultation paper has been published. By placing the future of the European Union in a global context, it confirms the need to reassess our future policies in a wider framework, taking into account the various interdependent relationships the European project has with the rest of the world, particularly the Mediterranean.

2. In this new context, we believe it is necessary to reassess European strategy through a renewed geographical and strategic approach, both as far as its internal and external policies are concerned:

- at internal level, it is clear that the new priorities of the European project outlined here cannot be applied in the same way across the whole European territory. While it is up to each country to implement decisions taken at EU level individually, such decisions can only be more effective if they take into account the specific circumstances of certain geographical areas in a complementary manner, and try to improve coordination between the EU instruments that will be applied there. This is how the EU is implementing the initial provisions of strategies for the Baltic and Danube areas, using the macro-region concept. In the same spirit, the Mediterranean regions call for the formalisation of European strategy on the Mediterranean. They thus urge EU member states, in particular those bordering the Mediterranean, to raise this issue within the European Council, so that, with the support of the Spanish Presidency, the European Commission can start preparing it. Future EU policies in the European Mediterranean must thus take into account the area's specific characteristics in the fields of agriculture, innovation, transport and maritime policy to name but a few examples.

- At external level, the EU has a very specific relationship with countries covered by neighbourhood policy. While this relationship must naturally involve all EU countries, it can also benefit from the specific local links which certain European peripheries foster on a day-to-day basis. Just as there are very specific local relationships between the European part of the Baltic and Russia, between Romania and Bulgaria and the Black Sea Basin and between the European Danube Basin and certain Balkan countries, there are also specific local relationships between countries from the south of Europe and those on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. This can be beneficial for the whole of Europe. In this spirit, the Mediterranean regions have made a large contribution to the Barcelona process and the Union of the Mediterranean: submission of a report on the future of cohesion policy in the Mediterranean to Commission President José Manuel Barroso in February 2008, involvement in the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean on 13 July 2008 on the role of regional and local authorities, and creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM).

3. The Mediterranean regions thus call on the European Commission to further develop its work on the future of the European project by integrating this local external dimension, which is essential in order to strengthen the cultural, economic and trade links which unite us with our Mediterranean partners within a single community of purpose. We also share the same environmental challenges and threats, which have been made greater by climate change.

4. They emphasise the essential role the regions must play in this project, both in the delivery of EU policies within the European Mediterranean and in strengthening links between the EU and its Mediterranean partners.

5. They ask the European Commission, in particular DG Regio and DG Relex, to devise suitable policy and programming instruments to further strengthen this strategic link with our partners and to take account of the opinion of the Mediterranean regions in order to adapt the major lines of action of this new strategy to their specific and particular needs.

6. Lastly, they are very concerned to ensure that cohesion policy is gradually implemented in all countries to the south and the east of the Mediterranean, in accordance with partnership objectives which could be negotiated with each of them on the basis of a joint integration principle.