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Diritti Valori Innovazione Sostenibilità



## SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF MEDGOVERNANCE MEDITERRANEAN REPORT

### Background: the MEDGOVERNANCE project

The MEDGOVERNANCE project, implemented in the framework of the MED interregional cooperation programme, gathers 6 regions (Andalusia, Catalonia, PACA, Piedmont, Latium, Tuscany) with their respective research and training institutes (CeSPI, Rome; Institut de la Méditerranée, Marseille; IEMed, Barcelona; MAEM/MEMA, Florence; Paralleli, Turin; Three Cultures Foundation, Seville and the technical support of Plural, Florence) and the Inter-Mediterranean Commission of the CPMR in order to elaborate political recommendations on the way to better integrate regional authorities into the development and implementation of Mediterranean policies. The project started in 2009 with a diagnosis phase aiming at analyzing the governance framework for the preparation and the implementation of major policies impacting the Mediterranean region in five policy fields: transportation, competitiveness and innovation, environment, culture and migration. For each of these domains, the issue of “multilevel governance” and, more particularly, of the actual contribution of regions to these policies was investigated. Each research institute participating in the MEDGOVERNANCE project coordinated the preparation of Thematic Reports through the coordination of transnational working group involving stakeholders actively engaged in the specific policy fields. The Institut de la Méditerranée has made a transversal analysis of the contributions prepared by the project partners which are presented in the Mediterranean Governance Report (hereafter “Report”)

### The actual regional contribution to the Euromed policy making

Among the most striking elements having and presented in this document, we find the limited influence of the influence tools developed by regions since the 1970s and therefore the difficulties for regional authorities to benefit from the emergence of multilevel governance as a commonly recognised model at European level.

The first phase of the MEDGOVERNANCE project provides with a preliminary view of the intrinsic complexity of the European policy making process, often compared to a “jig saw puzzle”. Before assessing the effective impact of regions within EU institutions and procedures, the first issue at stake has been to understand the way these institutions and procedures are actually “working”. Beside formal and official decision-making processes, one observes that European policies are the result of very complex process involving a wide range of public and private stakeholders, competing with one another. Some basic assets play a key role in the capacity of influence of the stakeholders on European policy making process: time and availability, technical expertise, direct relationships with decision-takers within the different European institutions. Most of the Mediterranean regions are fully aware of this competitive context and have therefore developed structured and professional influence tools and strategies. A diversity of specific networks, organizations and initiatives have progressively emerged, aiming at improving the





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influence of Mediterranean local and regional authorities. Different networks and organizations aiming at representing Mediterranean local and regional organizations may be mentioned, from bodies open to all kind of local authorities like the Mediterranean Commission of the UCGL, to more specific organizations such as Arc Latins (gathering provincial authorities), Medcités (gathering local authorities and municipalities), etc.

These different tools and organizations have achieved significant results in influencing the European policy-making process. For example, on transport issues, the CPMR has directly influenced European policy making on two specific topics: the inclusion of MOS in the financial regulation of the TEN-T programme and the establishment of European coordinator specifically dedicated to MOS. In both contexts, the lobbying role of CPMR has been quite effective. Nevertheless, it seems that Mediterranean regions' organization still need to professionalize their lobbying instruments. Moreover, the difficulty to reach shared consensus on common strategic goals also undermines the regions' influence capacity.

## **The regionalization of Euromed policies**

The broad diffusion of the principles of multilevel governance within European institutions and national governments has resulted in a massive reinforcement of the regions' participation to the implementation of so-called "top-down" policies. Regional authorities have become recognized as relevant levels of implementation for European and national policies. In this framework, different types of contributions and positions of regions are to be observed from a direct management of activities by regions in a "centralized" governance framework to a role of "catalyst" in governance model sharing responsibilities between local, regional and national stakeholders; another interesting trend is the progressive empowerment of regions on "regalian" policy fields such as migrations. Beyond the empowerment of regional authorities themselves, the increasing implementation of a multilevel governance involves the growing participation of civil society actors in the implementation of European and national policies. Such evolution echoes the claim for a more "horizontal society" less dominated by the predominant role of centralized institutions be they European, national or even regional. The case studies have highlighted that "horizontal actors" from the private sector and from civil society are being actively involved in the implementation of the policies and projects analysed during the first phase of the MEDGOVERNANCE project. However, the implementation of actual horizontal decision-making processes still remains limited. The major limit lies in incomplete or immature decentralization processes observed in European countries and even more so in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries. In the different national contexts investigated through the different case studies, the role of regions depends on the level of maturity of the decentralization process. In the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, decentralization and, all the more, regionalization are still in infancy. The implementation of multilevel governance of public policies remains very superficial and central states are still the key players of territorial development.

## **New opportunities for enforcing Euromed regions**

The last section of the Report is devoted to the exploration of possible paths for a regional strategic initiative taking account of the main conclusions emerging from the hereabove analysis. In this





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perspective, different ongoing processes at upper levels of decision are creating a favourable background for a regional initiative.

### **A new challenging Euromed context**

The latest decade has been characterized by a massive disillusion on the ability of intergovernmental decision-making processes to address transnational issues such as the future of the Mediterranean region and global warming. Another opportunity results from the repeated failures of intergovernmental processes (Union for the Mediterranean; negotiations on climate change) that allowed putting key issues for Mediterranean region on top of global political agenda while creating a political vacuum and allowing regions' empowerment on policy field that are traditionally characterized by the predominant role of central states and international organization. This inability of states to co-operate on common issues calls for the development of autonomous initiatives of local and regional authorities.

In 2010, the European Commission shall launch a wide consultation process on the future budgetary period that will run from 2014 to 2020. This consultation involves a discussion on a Commission's proposal concerning a wide range of policies, instrument and fundings among which the future of structural funds and of territorial cooperation. Among the documents and orientations backing the consultation process, a strategic document called EU 2020 has already been published by the European Commission.

Another significant trend is the development of macro regional processes and notably the elaboration and adoption of the Baltic Sea Strategy in 2009. Such processes are clearly giving a new impetus to the debate on the future of Mediterranean cooperation. The development of macro-regional strategies in different context (Baltic, Danube) provides with a renewed framework for structuring European cooperation and structural funds on areas cross-cutting several national boundaries.

### **The opportunity for a renewed Mediterranean regions' cooperation framework**

Preparing the next budget period constitutes an opportunity for Mediterranean regions to take initiative and to prepare a renewed operational cooperation framework for the Mediterranean regions.

#### TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN "MACRO-REGION"?

A meaningful common initiative could aim at the preparation of a Mediterranean macro region strategy on the model of the Baltic strategy officially endorsed by the European Commission in September 2009. A Mediterranean approach has to be designed, taking stock of the lessons learned from the preparation of the Baltic strategy and focus on the specificity of the Mediterranean context. In this framework, the following elements can already be identified as methodological principles for the preparation of a Mediterranean Macro-Region:

- **Inclusion of Southern territories:** although still weak and under the control of States, local and regional authorities are gaining influence in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries and they are endowed with a formal recognition within Euromed policies since the creation of the **ARLEM**;





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- **A step by step approach:** a regions' cooperation process will not include right from the start all the regions from all the 44 countries participating in the UfM but should begin with a **core group of pioneer regions** that would be progressively enlarged;
- **A limited set of issues and policy fields:** in order to be efficient and visible the future cooperation framework should not aim at covering a wide range of policy fields but, on the contrary, be clearly focused on limited set of core issues. In this perspective, **climate change** and **risks management** could, for instance, provide with interesting topics for cooperation;
- **The three NOs:** “no additional institution, no additional regulation, no additional fundings”. This principle has clearly favoured the support to the Baltic Sea region strategy by the European institutions and could therefore be endorsed by the Mediterranean regions in the preparation of their future cooperation framework;
- **A participatory and multilevel dimension:** the preparation and the management of the future cooperation framework of Mediterranean regions should be based on a multilevel governance. As for the preparation, the Baltic Strategy provides with a good example with the implementation of a transnational participatory process involving many different stakeholders from each country including local and regional authorities. These processes allowed to identify the future region's priority areas and projects. As for the management, Mediterranean regions' shall have to innovate and create the conditions for a shared horizontal governance involving regional authorities together with member States and European institutions.

UPGRADING REGIONS' TOOLS FOR INFLUENCE ON EURO MEDITERRANEAN POLICIES

Moving towards a macro region involves also the “upgrading” of regions' capacities and tools to influence policymaking and implementation. The Committee of Regions and the newly created ARLEM are important and legitimate tools to communicate and interface with the European Commission but will not by themselves lead to reinforce internal strategic coherence between Mediterranean regions. New institutional and technical tools need to be developed taking in account the existing ones (such as the Intermed Commission of CPMR) in order to reinforce the regions influence towards the Commission.

The following actions can be envisaged:

- o Development of a partnership between ARLEM and the Inter Mediterranean Commission of CPMR (IMC) with the signature of Memorandum of Understanding including a joint work programme;
- o Creation of a Network of the Delegations of Mediterranean regions in Brussels; such network would notably allow to:
  - o Increase the impact of Mediterranean regions in policy making processes;
  - o Develop Mediterranean collective strategies on key policies impacting Mediterranean territories;
  - o Provide representation and information to Southern and Eastern Mediterranean regions' on European and Mediterranean policies *via* existing delegations in





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Brussels.

- Promotion of the the creation of a Network of Mediterranean MPs within the European Parliament;
- Promotion of multilevel governance and particularly of the regions' integration within European regulations;
- Enhancement of the Mediterranean regions' expertise capacities through:
  - Development of Mediterranean networks of research institutes on specific topics (e.g. transportation, environment, etc.) in order to improve the skills and expertise available to Mediterranean regions;
  - Including new institutes from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries into RIM.
  - Consolidate RIM as a recognized scientific assistance to regions, duly integrated with the development of the regions influence toolkit.

**In this perspective, the Inter Mediterranean Commission of the CPMR will give an official mandate to the Réseau des Instituts de la Méditerranée (RIM) in order to investigate and prepare a methodology for this future initiative. The future activities scheduled for 2010 and 2011 within the MEDGOVERNANCE project will therefore be used by the RIM to address this request.**

