



Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR

A road map for Macro-regional strategies in the Mediterranean

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT AND THE NEED FOR A MACROREGIONAL APPROACH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean area represents a complex socio-economic, political and institutional setting on different levels combining diverse European, national, regional, local and global cultures, strategies, funds and policies. In particular, it encompasses certain member countries of the EU, pre-accession and candidate countries, as well as countries included in the southern neighbourhood policy, Euro-Mediterranean and multilateral institutions and different sets of sub-national, economic and civil society players. On the other hand, it is clear that the common challenges¹ faced by the Mediterranean basin have not been dealt with effectively, despite a relatively high deployment of resources and actors. The development gap between the territories clearly demonstrates that both the political dialogue and the financial and cooperative instruments employed to date should be used in a more efficient, effective and coordinated way based on the principles of partnership and multi-level governance². As a consequence, the territorial and maritime governance of the Mediterranean needs to be improved in order to provide effective responses to common challenges.

In this context the IMC CPMR proposes to apply and adapt to the Mediterranean basin the Macro-Regional approach that the EU has been testing during the last years in the Baltic and the Danube areas and more recently in the Adriatic-Ionian or in the Alpine areas on a tailored and gradual basis: starting from the capitalisation of the European experience and from the countries and territories of the EU Mediterranean Shore of the Basin, but leaving the door opened - from the beginning - to the gradual involvement and co-ownership of the countries and territories of the whole area.

II. MAIN CONCEPTS BEHIND THE MACRO REGIONAL APPROACH APPLIED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

The main concepts behind the Macro Regional approach to be applied in the Mediterranean shall take into account primarily the reflections and recommendations included in the previous reports and opinions on the subject that have been drafted in the last two years by the European Commission³, the European Parliament⁴, the Committee of the Regions, the ARLEM⁵, the EU Economic and Social Committee, as the ones by other key actors as the associations of Local and Regional Actors, the Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR⁶, or Arco Latino.

¹ At different levels: political (e.g. democratic transitions, decentralisation), socio-economic and environmental (e.g. intelligent, inclusive, sustainable growth), cultural (e.g. intercultural dialogue).

² Final Declaration of the IMC CRPM General Assembly, Barcelona, June 2013

³ E.g. The Added value of Macro-Regional Strategies. COM(2013) 468 final; The governance of macro-regional strategies COM(2014) 284 final

⁴ Evolution of the macro-regional strategies of the EU: current practices and future perspectives, especially in the Mediterranean (2011/2179/INI)

⁵ Annual reports on the territorial dimension of the Union of the Mediterranean, Ecoter report on a "cohesion strategy for the Mediterranean."

⁶ Final Declaration of the IMC CRPM General Assembly (Barcelona, June 2013); IMC CPMR Action Plan 2013-2014; Mediterranean Integrated Strategy of the IMC CPMR (2012)

In particular the IMC CPMR would like to summarize the following concepts that shall be applied to the Macro-Regional approach in the Mediterranean:

- **The variable geometry⁷:**

- A global Integrated Mediterranean Strategy to be developed in the mid-long term perspective - **EUSMED** (Global draft action plan by 2017 during the Maltese presidency, to be updated every 3 years starting from 2020) that should include three interconnected strategies:
- the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy - **EUSAIR** (ongoing pilot. Action plan by 2014),
- the Western Mediterranean – **EUSWEST Med** (Action plan by 2016),
- the Eastern Mediterranean – **EUSEAST Med** (Action plan by 2020).

The EUSAIR, could work as a first pilot at a governance level as well, while considering to a greater extent the formal participation of 4 non-EU Member states and the synergies that will have to be drawn with the Danube and the Alpine Strategies. Possible positive impacts from working on some of the pillars already identified should have a spill over effect on future strategies.

The other Macro-Regions should take advantage of all of this experience and be drafted from the beginning based on specific needs, pillars and key actions, relying on the existing cooperation relations and particularities, though ensuring a periodical, efficient and coherent coordination with the others, through the global Integrated strategy that shall become their overall framework. The States should decide, in a participatory way (together with their sub-national governments), which specific territories that shall be more involved in each Macro-Region. This variable geometry perspective could give more dynamism from the very beginning and facilitate the operational functioning of the strategies towards the efficient, smooth and consistent long term implementation of the global strategy EUSMED.

- **Governance: the equilibrated multilevel and polycentric approach, the balance between top-down and bottom-up elements, and the need of setting up public-private synergies:**

A more balanced governance shall be paramount to ensure the leadership of the strategies by specific Member States together with the ownership and multilevel governance shared with their sub-national governments. The role of the Regions, the Local Governments and their associations in the definition and the implementation of the strategies are fundamental as the one of the States. The European Commission - through its different DGs⁸ - should ensure the monitoring (and boost the start up) of the whole process.

The stakeholder coordination should be facilitated by the European Territorial Cooperation and the organisation and institutions that could work as a catalyser for public and private actors (materialising the principles of the triple helix)⁹ including the civil society organisations, the universities, businesses, etc. Periodical Fora shall be constituted and take place among these actors, in particular one for each strategy EUSAIR, EUSWEST, EUSEAST and the EUSMED Forum (annual coordination forum)¹⁰.

The ARLEM and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) shall have a key role when gathering the interests of the Local, Regional and National actors of the southern and the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. In particular, the UfM Secretariat shall be charged by the European Commission to give a special support to the stakeholder coordination and key project implementation when the priority of the strategies will coincide with its 6 priority areas. The European External Action Service and the DG Devco of the European Commission should also be involved in a gradual manner. The high added value and experience of the organisation as the CPMR shall also be considered when dealing with stakeholders coordination.

When the strategies will be in place it will be important to count on multilevel monitoring committees, priority coordinators, horizontal action leaders, national and regional contact points. The EC and programmes as Interact shall give an organisational, communication and capitalisation support.

Last but not least, the citizens need to be put - from the beginning - at the core of the Macro-Regional approach in the Mediterranean. The strategies shall be conceived in order to have a real impact on the daily aspects of people's life. In this sense, Local and Regional governments are fundamental to reach this goal,

⁷ For a global view please see the annex II of the Arlem Ecoter Report on a Cohesion Strategy for the Mediterranean

⁸ Regio, Mare, R&I, Enterprise, Employment, Devco etc.

⁹ with a special role for the Committee of the Regions, the associations of Local and Regional Authorities as the EU Economic and Social Committee

¹⁰ Their launch could be foreseen in different steps according to the calendar of this road map, but they should be all operative by 2020

as they represent the closer institutions to the citizens. The communication aspect of the strategies will be thus fundamental.

- **The gradual "step-by-step" voluntary approach** to be applied to the **Macro-Regional strategies** concerning cooperation with the southern countries and territories.

Although the strategies will be conceived on the base of the EU experience and started from binding agreements among EU Mediterranean Members states, many of their objectives will be impossible to meet without a voluntary cooperation or some agreement on priorities with non-EU partners, being also useful for achieving economic competitiveness, cohesion as well as for fostering EU's external action (Neighbourhood, Enlargement, Development etc.). It is clear that the future co-ownership of these strategies shall be approached in a gradual way, based on a step-by-step approach, which might facilitate the gradual involvement of Mediterranean Partner Countries (avoiding possible political and institutional obstacles). In this respect, as stated in the Arlem Report on a "Cohesion Strategy for the Mediterranean", one possibility could be the involvement of southern countries and local and regional authorities in an initial phase, above all by capitalising on steps taken and through synergies in specific cooperation projects and on a voluntary and non-binding basis at political level.

- **The need of *thematic concentration* by strategies (EUSMED and EUSAIR, EUSWEST, EUSEAST).**

Even though the Integrated Strategy EUSMED could address – in a coherent perspective – a relatively wide set of pillars in the long term, each strategy should employ the principle of "thematic concentration" in order to be more effective. The chosen priorities should present a special added value in order to be addressed at macro-regional level and not only through other ways or already existing cooperation frameworks.

Hypothetic pillars identified in the annex II of the ARLEM Report for the Integrated Strategy¹¹: 1. Environment, Climate Change and Energy; 2. SMEs, Training, Research and Youth employment, 3. Blue Growth and integrated maritime policies 4. Improving Inter-Territorial Accessibility, Interconnections and Migratory flows; 5. Democratic governance, support for decentralisation and high quality public services. Cross-cutting Element: Innovation in processes and networking, in projects, initiatives and cooperation partnerships, in developing new technologies, in using existing technologies.

During an open consultation process (following a draft proposal by the European Commission), the key actors involved will have to choose the concrete priorities and key initiatives for each strategy, including the integrated one (e.g. decontamination of the Mediterranean sea, fight against climate change in coastal areas, efficiency energy and renewable energies in Buildings, maritime transport/safety, management of migration fluxes, among others).

- **The synergies to be set up with Territorial Cooperation programmes in the area, the mainstreaming, and the importance of capitalisation of previous projects/initiatives**

Despite the "three NOs" rule (no new institutions, no new funding, no new legislation), there is a need showed by many Local and Regional actors for a more systematic support from the EU for the start-up of the macro-regional strategies emerging in the Mediterranean area by means of transnational cooperation programmes such as the new MED programme, as well as via the future Mediterranean basin programme on cross-border cooperation within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Instrument and technical assistance from the Structural Funds. In this perspective, many stakeholders involved in the EUSAIR strategy recently called for a "three YES rule": more complementary funding, more institutional coordination and more new projects.

In particular for preparatory actions it will be necessary to count on the direct support of the EU institutions and ETC Programmes (Transnational, CBC, IPA...). On the other hand, and for the implementation of the strategies, the alignment with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) will be fundamental. External instruments managed by multilateral organisations and individually by Member states and Regional and Local authorities should be taken into account as complementary tools.

Moreover, another fundamental aspect for the smooth and relevant development of the macro-regional strategies in the Mediterranean shall be the capitalisation of previous projects and initiative in the area. Best practices shall be identified, adapted and replicated on a different scale, as necessary, in order to reach a multiplier effect, all overlapping initiatives should be avoided and only effective synergies should be searched etc. The role of Interact programme and of ETC capitalisation projects will be a key aspect for the definition and the implementation of the strategies.

11 Annex II: Possible thematic areas to be developed as priorities (and to be shaped by strategies) and examples of new "key initiatives or projects" to be drawn up and used (existing projects) with leading stakeholders for an integrated macro-regional focus in the Mediterranean (summary table for the three proposed macro-regional strategies including funding reference instruments).

- **The synergies to be set up with financial tools for improving investments in the Southern Mediterranean**

A complementary European initiative to co-ordinate investments in the whole Mediterranean bringing together the EU, Member States, European Financial Institutions as well as International Financial Institutions, EU and non EU funds, multilateral and bilateral donors, and partner countries, should be developed and coordinated with the Macro-Regional strategies in order to foster synergies in investments with a clear socio-economic development impact on the basin.

III. **ROAD MAP FOR THE MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: FROM THE BOTTOM-UP PROCESS TO THE FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION**

1. BOTTOM UP PROCESS AND FORMAL REQUEST – 1st phase: 2014

Current achievements concerning Macro-Regional Strategies in the Mediterranean:

- The inclusion of the theme for the debate in the European and the Euro-Med Agenda, as the **general agreement by many representatives of the Regions, the Local governments and the civil society on the need to apply the Macro-Regional approach in the Mediterranean**: already reached in the frame of the IMC CPMR, the ARLEM, Arco Latino, Med Cities, the EESC, European Parliament, the open consultation of the Med Programme concerning its new Operational Programme etc.
- **Various European projects, partnerships and initiatives reflecting or asking for a Macroregional approach in the Mediterranean** (Coast-Gap, Bologna Charter, Med governance, Proforbiomed, Marie, Elih-Med, Otremed, Creative Med, Maremed, COM&CAP MarInA-Med among others; several projects selected in the frame of the Maritime call of the Med programme etc.)
- The probable inclusion within the forthcoming **EU Med Transnational programme** of a **priority axis 4 on a “Shared Mediterranean Sea”** regarding the thematic objective 11: **enhancing Mediterranean governance**
- **The manifestation of interest of the Union for the Mediterranean**: already showed in the frame of the ARLEM and the IMC CPMR (further exchanges will follow).
- The ongoing works of the EU Commission and Parliament together with the Members states and the Local and Regional Authorities, as external key stakeholders on the **Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region – EUSAIR¹²**.

In this context, and after this bottom-up process, the final calendar concerning the 1st phase of the road map should be the following:

- **Agreement to be reached by the 9 Mediterranean States of the European Union potentially involved** in the Mediterranean Integrated Macro-Regional Strategy as in the three Interconnected Macro-Regions:
 - o A specific meeting of the Permanent representatives of Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus shall be organised in Brussels during the first part of the II semester 2014. The aim would be to gather the views of the member states and verify the requirements that are necessary to present the request of applying the macro regional approach in the Mediterranean to a meeting of the EU Council during the IT Semester.
 - o Each Local and Regional government interested in proposing this MR approach for the Mediterranean to its member state should get in touch, in parallel, with the Ministries of Foreign affairs and Economic Development of its Member State, sharing the political request. The subject of the Mediterranean macro region should be included for discussion in the Agenda of the summits gathering the regions and/or the local governments and/or the state in the different Member States (e.g. in Italy: Conferenza delle Regioni, Unione delle Province d'Italia, Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani, Conferenza Stato-Regioni, Conferenza Stato-Città, Conferenza Unificata).

- Specific high level consultative debates should be developed in already existing Fora:
 - The Intermediterranean Commission of the CPMR – General Assembly to be held in Venice (Italy) the 27th of June 2014 with the participation of representatives of some of the EU Members States interested.
 - Conference on the EUSAIR of the Committee of the Regions (COTER Commission) to be held in Fabriano-Ancona (Italy) next 11th of July 2014
 - ECOTER Commission of the ARLEM to be held the 20th of October 2014 in Malaga (Spain). High level political and technical conference to be organised by the CPMR and its regions, possibly in Rome in the month of October, during the Italian semester¹³
 - Launch event of the EUSAIR to be organised the 18th of November in Brussels (BE)¹⁴).
- **Agreement to be reached by the 28 EU Member States** on the Mediterranean Integrated Macro-Regional Strategy (as on the three Interconnected Macro-Regions).
 - The nine EU Med countries should present and share their vision with the other 19 EU Members states and get a specific paragraph included in the Conclusion of a European Council meeting during the Italian semester¹⁵.
 - Paragraph for the conclusions of the EU Council (Draft proposal for the Member States to be evaluated during the Greek and the Italian Semesters and to be possibly approved by the end of 2014):

“Recalling its conclusions of April and June 2011 and December 2012, when the European Council asked the Commission to draft a strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region, and taking into account the reports and the opinions of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the EU Economic Social Committee, the ARLEM as other political declaration by local and regional stakeholders of the area, the European Council invites the European Commission, in cooperation with Member States and its Regional and Local authorities, to elaborate an EU Integrated Strategy for the Mediterranean Region by June 2017 to be launched during the Maltese presidency of the EU. This strategy shall include, in addition to the already running EUSAIR, a specific Strategy for the Western Mediterranean that should be elaborated by 2016 as a Strategy for the Eastern Mediterranean to be defined by 2020. All these strategies should communicate and contribute to the consolidation of a unique and long lasting strategy for the whole Mediterranean that should include the Neighborhood dimension on a progressive and voluntary basis.”

2. STUDY, SET UP, CONSULTATION AND LAUNCH – 2nd phase: 2015-2020

- **Discussion paper of the European Commission** on the Integrated Strategy and the interconnected Mediterranean Strategies for the Adriatic-Ionian, the Western Mediterranean and the Eastern Med
- **Consultations to be coordinated at different levels by the Members states** together with the ARLEM, UfM, EESC, CoR with the help of CPMR IMC and other key stakeholders and the involvement of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (PA-UfM), the operating European Groups for Territorial Cooperation-EGCTs and Euro-Regions.
- **Communication by the Commission including the action plan of the EU Strategy for the Western Mediterranean** by the end of the 1st semester of 2016¹⁶
- **Communication by the Commission including the action plan of the EU Integrated Strategy** by the end of the 1st semester of 2017

13 The event should gather the main political stakeholders at EU and Euromed level, the ETC programs, and show concrete experiences of the added value of the MR approach through specific projects/initiatives as Beachmed, the Bologna Charter, Coastgap and the Joint action plan on “Developing conditions for the Blue Growth in the Mediterranean”. It should also make synergies with a capitalisation event of the project COM&CAP MarInA-Med addressing several concrete maritime issues of interest for the Med Macro-Regions.

14 In this frame it could be included a reflection on the Mediterranean Relevance of the EUSAIR, its perspectives for synergies as other related aspects.

15 In the frame of a GAC (e.g. 29/09, tentative) or a European Council meeting (23/10, when the Eusair could be endorsed)

16 Year of the mid - term review for the Multiannual Financial Framework

- **Communication by the Commission including the action plan of the EU Strategy for the Eastern Mediterranean** by the end of the 2nd semester of 2020
- **Preparatory and support actions to be undertaken between 2015 and 2020:**
 - o Studies/projects in the field of the Med programme, the Eni CBC programme, the IPA Adriatic, the Regional Operative programmes
 - o Set up of stakeholder Fora for EUSAIR, EUSWEST, EUSEAST, annual coordination Forum EUSMED
 - o Set up of multilevel monitoring committees, priority coordinators, horizontal action leaders, national and regional contact points
 - o Coordination with UfM-Arlem and the southern countries and territories
 - o Seed money facilities supporting horizontal leaders/ priority coordination actions etc. by the European Commission
 - o Possible new EGCTs open to the southern territories

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION – 3rd phase

- **Alignment between** ESIF funds and EU relevant thematic programmes and the Strategies (both, in the initial phase of the period 2014 for the EUSAIR, in the mid-term review, and in the next financial period 2021-2027 for the others). For instance, the inclusion of specific references to the strategies in the Partnership Agreements, in the Regional Operational Programmes (e.g. use of art. 96.3 d of the Common Provision Regulations, funding bonus for regional projects addressing macroregional priorities) as in the ETC programmes.
- **Implementation of the key actions identified in the action plans of the strategies** (from 2015 concerning the EUSAIR, from 2017 concerning the EUSWEST, from 2018 concerning the EUSMED and from 2021 concerning the EUSEAST).
- **Monitoring of the governance of the Macro Regions:** annual *Fora and conferences*, reports and *evaluation in itinere* by the Commission, opinions by the other EU Institutions.