



DECLARATION

of the Political Bureau of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission

26th November 2015 – Rabat (Region Rabat-Salé-Kenitra)

In continuity with the previous Declarations of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (IMC),¹ the members of its Political Bureau gathered in Rabat on the 26th November 2015 wish to transfer the following political messages to European and International Institutions as to the main key players and stakeholders of the Mediterranean area:

I. JOINT EFFORTS FOR PEACE & DIALOGUE TO FACE COMMON CHALLENGES

First of all, the Intermediterranean Commission expresses its **dismay and deep solidarity to the citizens of Lebanon, France, Mali and Tunisia** after the recent terrifying terrorist attacks in **Beirut, Paris, Bamako and Tunis**, to the families of the victims of all barbarian acts of terrorism and to the **millions of people that every day flee from war, terror and dictatorship**. The Intermediterranean Commission also rejects all kinds of religious, ethnical, racial, gender, political or human manifestations of hatred, and recalls the spirit of dialogue underlined through its **“We are all Mediterranean”** campaign, which still needs wider support. Today, European and international institutions must do everything possible to prevent Europe from withdrawing into self-interest and the Mediterranean becoming a graveyard of refugees.

Furthermore, it is clear that **solidarity and awareness raising in societies and institutions** are key aspects to deal with the current situation. Unfortunately, they do not seem to be enough to face the magnitude of the threats and atrocities that we are witnessing. An urgent, concrete and collective response at all levels is thus needed, from the international community-and in particular the UN and its Security Council- to the EU, as on the more local spheres. This response shall focus as a priority on a single common interest: the promotion of **peace and the extinction of terror**. On the one hand, peace is indeed a *sine qua non* condition to be able to deal effectively with the rest of the important challenges of the area. On the other hand, **mutual intercultural understanding and development** are inseparable and indissoluble parts of the same issue and the key to break the vicious circle of violence fueled by ignorance and fear.

The citizens of the Mediterranean are in fact facing a very complex **socio-economic and geo-political situation** on all rims with terrorism and insecurity (the raise of ISIS, several conflicts including civil wars), famines, droughts and the effects of climate change, uncontrolled migrations fluxes and human trafficking, structural impacts of a deep and long lasting economic crisis, the increase of economic disparities in the societies with the raise of unemployment rates, disadvantaged situation of the youth and women, the difficult transition to democratic governance, among other important issues. Even if the area has experienced some positive events in countries as Morocco or in particular in Tunisia with its democratic process towards a new constitution- awarded with the “Nobel Peace Prize” to its “National Dialogue Quartet” - the scenario has been globally worsening to an alarming extent during the last years. Besides, Tunisian citizens need to be supported in order to keep developing their paths towards their socio-political reformation without incidents, while other Mediterranean populations in Northern Africa and the Middle East need help in finding the basic conditions to set a long lasting constructive dialogue among the different parts of society and religious or cultural communities.

In this framework, the support of the International Community, the EU and its territories **to peace building, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, sustainable and inclusive development, democratic governance and territorial cohesion** in the southern and eastern parts of the basin ought to be boosted, today more than ever. **Regional and local authorities**, as closest authorities to the citizens, have a specific role to play. They entail a very high potential for the implementation of practical cooperation actions and diplomacy relations towards the creation of a **culture of cohabitation and territorial and social cohesion** in all territories of the Mediterranean and Europe.

Moreover, as Regions are at the forefront, they have the potential to better monitor radicalisation on their territories by setting up specific measures to this extent, or even specific observatories to better understand, help prevent and monitor these dangerous phenomena.

¹(Barcelona 2013, Patras 2014, Venice 2014, Marseilles 2014, Nafplio 2015)

The EU and Euro-Mediterranean Institutions shall better exploit all of this potential by involving local and regional authorities more frequently in the conception and implementation of policies, strategies and concrete cooperation actions on the field.

II. A RENEWED EU NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, STRONGLY LINKED TO THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION, TO MIGRATION & OTHER EU POLICIES

The Intermediterranean Commission recalls the political messages on the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its Southern component, included in the [CPMR joint answer to the EC Consultation ENP review](#)² and welcomes the [EC Joint Communication released on the 18th of November 2015](#), which reorients the ENP through a renewed global strategy more focused on: stabilisation, differentiation & ownership, key sectors for the inclusive economic and social development, security and migration, more flexibility of financial instruments, effectiveness and a new partnership approach.

The Intermediterranean Commission welcomes this new approach and in particular the specific mentions included in the EC Communication about: the actions oriented to improve economic, social and territorial cohesion; the proposals on migration and legal & mutually beneficial mobility; the need to develop local and regional authorities in the area in order to contribute to the objectives of “good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights”; the cross-cutting references to capacity building and in particular the ones related to the public administration; the proposals for strengthening south-south cooperation at sub-regional scale in the Mediterranean, the specific references on the regional cooperation to be promoted through Macro-Regional strategies and Territorial Cooperation Programmes. Moreover, it strongly supports and offer its contribution to the future initiatives concerning young people and in particular, the ones focused on you the employment & employability, mobility, education and the “partnerships for youth”. Besides, it hopes that the overall budget of the ENP and the components involving regional and local authorities will keep the proportion concerning the Southern and Eastern partnerships (2/3 and 1/3 respectively) and be globally increased in the future.

The Intermediterranean Commission also underlines that in the future discussions with the Member States and the Med Partner Countries for the final redefinition and implementation of the ENP, some factors and aspects shall be especially considered in order to ensure a real co-ownership, efficacy and impact at territorial level on the Mediterranean area:

1. The operational aspects of the **coordination of the ENP with other EU policies– Migration and CFSP above all – and the relevant financial instruments**, but also with other external instruments, funds and key organizations operating in the Med area, and exploiting the potential of the Union for the Mediterranean, in terms of political inclusive dialogue and concerning concrete projects;

If it seems clear that the linkages between the ENP and the Migration policy (with its specific Agenda) and the “Global Approach on Migration and Mobility” (GAMM) or the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) now appear to be among the most important aspects to be fostered, the operational aspects of coordination seems to be still unclear and the real implication of Regions in the process still appears to be too limited.

In this framework, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission highly regrets for instance that its demands to consider the participation of Regions in very important debates as the ones on migration held in Valletta last 11/12 November 2015 were not envisaged. Despite this lack of direct participation, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission supports the overall approach of the **final declaration of this EU-Africa Summit on Migration** concerning the root causes of migration and the need to address them in a comprehensive way through actions for saving lives in emergency situations and in full respect of human rights, conflict prevention, legal mobility, development and job creation (with a focus on youth employability) and investment opportunities. The Intermediterranean Commission also welcomes the creation of the “EU Emergency Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa.” Regarding the specific Action Plan produced by the Summit, the Intermediterranean Commission Regions offer their operational contributions in particular to collaborate in actions addressed to the promotion of diaspora engagement and entrepreneurial development, the mobility of students, researchers & entrepreneurs, as on the reinforcement of the protection of refugees and other displaced persons.

Nonetheless, it is essential to include as much as possible regional and local governments in all future discussions and actions to be implemented on the ground concerning migration. **The needs of Regions in terms of hard (health infrastructures and facilities, shelters, etc.) and soft measures (socio-economic integration)** to be setup in both EU and origin countries need indeed to be **mapped and considered very carefully** with the help of the Regions and local authorities themselves, together with national authorities. This exercise will help all Med countries to better understand issues on the ground and help redirect - if necessary and relevant - the expenditure of European Funds (including ENI and ESIF) on migration-related priorities

²Joint position of the CPMR together with its Intermediterranean and Balkans & Black Sea Regional Commission

in a more efficient way (also giving to the Regions a more direct access to the Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration - AMIF).

In this perspective, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission also recalls and stresses all the political recommendations and undertakings included in [the CPMR Policy Position on Migration](#), recently approved by its last General Assembly.³

CFSP and Migration policy apart, the ENP should also foster its links with the following policies: Development Policy, Research & Development, Transport, Integrated Maritime Policy, Environment, Energy and Cohesion. In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission Regions express the need to better clarify these links and to find their specific place in the architecture.

2. **The impulse towards the “territorialisation”** of the Policy, which would imply a **higher involvement of Local & Regional Authorities (LRAs)⁴ and the Civil Society** in its set-up and implementation, and the **adaptation of the concepts, principles and methodology of the EU Cohesion Policy** in the ENP and European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) frameworks;

This shall be done through the implementation of a better communication on the field, accompanying decentralization processes in Mediterranean partner countries, supporting democratic governance and territorial integrated development with capacity building actions, fostering the North-South and South-South dynamics of cross-border and transnational cooperation at regional scale hence constituting a concrete model for co-ownership, and twinning actions integrating local and regional authorities.

3. The development of specific instruments as **Macro-Regional (MRs) or Sea-Basin strategies (SBs)⁵ and Territorial Cooperation⁶**, which shall be boosted at financial and operational levels, and made more effective in the whole Med region based on a variable geometry and gradual approach, and combined with thematic concentration and mainstreaming.

In this regard, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission strongly supports the recommendations of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) and the process promoted by the European Commission's DG MARE concerning a possible setting-up of a **future maritime (or sea-basin) strategy for the Western Mediterranean**. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission will be happy to offer its contribution to the consortium that will be selected for implementing the objectives of the tender⁷ published in July 2015 by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) for the support to key players coordination and the building-up of a draft action plan for the strategy. At the same time, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission highly hopes that this new emerging strategy would take stock and draw link with the ongoing experience of the EU macro-regional Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which shall constitute the first pilot for the Mediterranean⁸ in a long path towards an integrated global strategy for the basin.

In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission invites, once more, the **EU Member States** (in particular the 9 MS from the Med area) to reflect upon the possibility to **give a faster and stronger impulse for the creation of new emerging sea-basin and macro-regional strategies in the area**, with a medium term road-map capable of reaching concrete results in view of the next **Maltese Presidency of the EU Council in 2017**. The Intermediterranean Commission also invites the representatives of the “5+5 Dialogue”, in particular the French and Moroccan co-Presidencies to build on the development of these tools to promote the stability and development of the Western Mediterranean.

Furthermore, the Intermediterranean Commission welcomes and supports the [Declaration](#) following the [Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy](#) and its stakeholders platform. It offers its contribution in the follow-up of the works at regional level and in connection with the Intergroup [Seas, Rivers, Islands & Coastal Areas](#) (SEARICA) of the European Parliament, and in coherence with the [CPMR Maritime Agenda](#) and the [COM&CAP MarInA-Med Policy Paper for an Integrated Maritime Approach](#). Actually, it is paramount to **strengthen the potential of blue economy in the basin** improving at the same time maritime multilevel governance and planning, preserving the environment from human-exerted pressures, and promoting employment, innovation and knowledge-based business opportunities through the development of the key maritime sectors encompassed in the Blue Growth Strategy.

³Global integrated approach to the refugee crisis and its roots, solidarity and support to the regions, improvement of legal migration channels, actions to promote socio-economic integration of migrants including self-employment and the promotion of Solidarity based Economy in all the neighborhood area, stronger participation of regions in the consultation and decisional processes for migration and development, cooperation etc.

⁴ Including their networks or associations.

⁵See the set of specific recommendations in the CPMR answer to the consultation and the [ARLEM Report 2014 on a “Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean”](#), the Intermediterranean Commission 2014 “[Road Map for Macro Regional and Sea Basin Strategies in the Mediterranean](#)” and the [Policy Paper of the Med Maritime Projects](#) released in June 2014.

⁶ See set of specific recommendations in the CPMR answer to the consultation.

⁷(2015/S 143-263157)

⁸also from a multilevel governance point of view

Concerning funding for the Southern Neighborhood area, the Intermediterranean Commission welcomes the recent announcement of the EU that will provide 365.5 million euros to promote the development of the private sector, democratic reforms and better living conditions in some of the Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco) and wonders about the extent to which LRAs could be involved in this process.

On a more general note, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission calls the **EU Institutions to recover the impulse towards a global and positive review of the “European Union project” and of its Treaties**. Despite the difficulties it is currently facing with the rise of nationalism and populism in some EU countries, the project needs to take a step towards consolidation and further integration for the sake of peace and prosperity. This review shall encompass a deep and sound debate for a **balanced and strong territorial integration within the EU and beyond with its neighbours**, including the preservation of key policies as the EU Cohesion Policy. This debate would also need to foresee a reform and possible global **increase of the EU budget, as well as the enforcement of a real Fiscal and Political Union**, capable of standing up in a global context as a **key unitary player**, bearer of democratic values and prosperity.

III. DECENTRALIZATION AND COOPERATION AS MEANS FOR COHESION, STABILITY & DEMOCRACY

Encompassing more than 450 million inhabitants, ⁹Mediterranean territories present many inequalities from the social, territorial cohesion and governance points of view. Very high disparities exist between the countries' GDPs per capita and (un-)employment levels, in particular in the most disadvantaged segments of their societies, and among the youth and women. In parallel, urbanization rates and concentration of population in metropolitan areas and littorals are very high and keep increasing, impeding a polycentric and balanced distribution of economic and population flows. Besides, we observe increasing levels of poverty (especially in urban agglomerations and rural areas), discrimination, the scarce participation of the most affected parts of society and cultural minorities in decision- and policy-making processes, and the very often isolation of certain peri-urban areas where the most dangerous tensions carry the risk of radicalization phenomena.

To face these challenges - including uncontrolled migration fluxes -and foster a balanced development of Med territories, **decentralization of powers** and **decentralized cooperation** are among the best instruments.

The first one, based on the subsidiarity principle, allows the effective representation of local population interests and at the same time the global interests of the countries. The regional level of administration of the territory in particular could help the set-up of integrated strategies and the effective repartition of benefits of territorial integrated development through functional networks of small and medium size towns. The second, in its wider definition, encompasses bilateral agreements and actions of LRAs and projects, including the ones developed in the frameworks of various EU programmes for territorial, thematic and development cooperation on different topics. These two instruments, together and interconnected with advocacy actions and capitalization of best practices, can work as backbones for cohesion and sustainable development, towards multilevel governance and local democracy.

Actually, in many Southern Mediterranean countries, after the Arab Spring, there is the urgent need - coming from the ground - to promote human development, accompanying it by the necessity to meet popular aspirations for a greater empowerment of citizens with their participation in decision- and policy-making. **Morocco** – with its recent reform on regionalization (2011), its territorial reorganization in 12 new regions (2015) and the direct election of its political representatives -and **Tunisia** - with its new constitution (2014) and the provisions on decentralization and cooperation of LRAs- are two outstanding examples that need to be celebrated and supported from all sides.

It is well worth noting that decentralization is a political and institutional phenomenon that is growing in a majority of countries at global level. These countries are gradually equipping themselves with local and regional assemblies elected by the population and governments that are accountable to the citizens, even if in many case the States are delegating to them important competences without the adequate financial resources to implement them effectively.

Furthermore, several Med regions already share bilateral agreements, memoranda of understanding for cooperation, or are involved in territorial cooperation projects in different fields linked to the development of territories: research and innovation in different sectors, sustainable urban and territorial planning, improvement of governance processes, promotion of renewable energies and efficiency energy, environmental protection, transport & logistics, social & solidarity-based economy or economic cooperation in specific sectors (e.g. sustainable tourism promotion, textile sector), youth mobility, education & inclusion, intercultural dialogue, citizens media, respect of human rights, among others topics.

For this reason, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission asks the **EU Institutions to fully exploit this potential and commits with its southern partners to support in particular Tunisian and Moroccan**

⁹with variable population growth rates in the northern and southern rims

Regions, in the framework of the ARLEM initiatives and the Platforma Strategic Partnership with the EC (and possibly beyond, in the future), through concrete **actions of capacity building for territorial integrated development**. The Intermediterranean Commission finally holds out a hand to all southern and eastern Mediterranean subnational counterparts to join the CPMR and work together on future joint and concrete actions of cooperation.

A better, balanced and polycentric territorial development with the help of strengthened LRAs and intercultural dialogue in all the Mediterranean countries, could surely give a strong impulse to a major stability and security of the whole region. In other words, decentralization and cooperation in this field, based on the specific needs of the territories could trigger the key factor for engaging a real virtuous circle for an enhanced social and territorial cohesion.

IV. A STRONG COMMITMENT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission calls for an ambitious shared commitment concerning the actions on climate change adaptation and mitigation towards the meeting of the COP21 next December 2015 in Paris, and recommends the authorities to better consider and take stock of the roles and actions of LRAs and the Civil Society, and in particular regarding:

- The suggestions included in the **“Positive Agenda”** and **Declaration** produced by the [MED COP 21](#) which - from now on - will gather before each COP meeting in order to better shape the Mediterranean vision on the climate challenge and the actions of key players of the area.
- The **recommendations and proposals of the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission**, shaped in the [Final Declaration of the General Assembly Florence](#) (November 2015), the [Policy Positions of the CPMR Political Bureau on Climate](#) (June 2015) and on [decentralized cooperation and the regional dimension in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development](#) (November 2015), the joint messages with the MED Commission of UCLG on [Climate](#) (December 2014) and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission vision on [the sustainable management of Water resources in the Mediterranean](#) (December 2014).

The Intermediterranean Commission commits to keep backing key initiatives at Mediterranean level as the [Bologna Charter and its Joint Action plan for the sustainable development of Med coastal areas](#) and the [Ljubljana Declaration on Efficiency Energy in Buildings](#) and to work on a specific Joint Action Plan for Energy Renovation at Mediterranean level. Both initiatives will be developed counting on the action and added value of LRAs in a multilevel governance perspective of interaction, exploiting and optimizing the potential of European Territorial Cooperation and ESIF funds (among other resources). They will also produce concrete projects and will increase the impact on the territory of EU Directives as MSP, MSFD, on Efficiency Energy, etc. and of international agreements as for instance the Barcelona Convention and its ICZM Protocol.