



General Assembly of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission FINAL DECLARATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY VENETO 2016

1st July 2016 – Venezia (Region Veneto)

In continuity with the previous Declarations of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission (IMC),¹ the members of its General Assembly - gathered in Venice on the 1st of July 2016 - 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. FACING COMMON CHALLENGES WITH JOINT SOLUTIONS FOR INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPEMENT & COHESION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

SECURITY AND MIGRATION CHALLENGES

The Intermediterranean Commission, reunited today, strongly reiterates its dismay and deep **solidarity** to the citizens of all countries hit by terrorist attacks and the millions of people that every day are forced to flee from war, terror, dictatorship as from extreme poverty or climate conditions to survive. In this complex geo-political context and humanitarian emergency, in particular concerning security and migration challenges, the Intermediterranean Commission:

1. **Observes** that common security and migration challenges seem far to be solved. The International Community and the EU, together with all their citizens, must keep joining their efforts in order to improve the situation and work at the same time for peace and socio-economic cohesion, trying to invert the tendency. The migration crisis continues to be very preoccupying with horrible tragedies over all Mediterranean routes, and especially in the eastern and central Med where smugglers are now concentrating human trafficking due to the summer season, and as the result of the closing of the 'Balkan road'.
2. **Considers** that this crisis has certainly been a wakeup call on some key administrative and political issues that were underestimated for too long², which conjugated to the strong unfolding humanitarian emergency, pose a serious challenge both to the welfare of migrants and of all our societies. So far, the EU response - with its global approach, the agenda for migration, and its several measures and funds³ - has been improving but seems to remain too weak. Mediterranean Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) are often facing this humanitarian crisis all alone, on their territories, on an ad-hoc basis, and without the necessary resources and means to tackle them. Moreover, despite their crucial role in confronting the crisis, the presence of these authorities in the relevant dialogue for policy-making on the issue is absolutely insufficient.
3. **Enlightens** that its regions - through its working groups and the CPMR Task Force on Migration - carried out several campaigns and advocacy actions towards the EU Institutions⁴. They also engaged in several exchanges of best practices concerning migrants reception and integration in socio-economic and health systems, as concrete EU cooperation projects (presented under AMIF, DEAR calls) or pilot initiatives (as MIPEX-REG).
4. **Emphasizes** that while the mechanism for the relocation for refugees from Greece and Italy to other Member States is severely underperforming (1 % of the total agreed number), some Regions have shown to the States and the EU their will to receive thousands of them. In this sense, some of the Intermediterranean Commission Regions are already carefully preparing their reception systems for this possibility, and even signing bilateral agreements to boost the relocation and further integration of migrants in their healthcare systems. This kind of

¹ ([Barcelona 2013](#), [Patras 2014](#), [Venice 2014](#), [Marseilles 2014](#), [Nafplio](#) and [Rabat 2015](#))

² border control, asylum process, international cooperation, etc.)

³ the trust fund approved in Valletta Summit with African countries, the new Emergency Assistance Instrument or the efforts of coordination between the migration, the external action and the neighbourhood policy

⁴ Including also initiatives such as the joint letter sent by the regions of Attica, Sicily, and Lazio to the heads of the European Commission, the Council, and the European Council, concerning the need for strengthening the role of local and regional authorities in tackling the migration issue by facilitating their access to financial tools and funds and by addressing the crucial 'specific group' issues of **unaccompanied minors**.

measures shall be encouraged and supported by the EU and Member states to accelerate administrative processes and increase efficiency on all levels.

5. **Calls** again on the EU and national institutions for the implementation of the following actions and measures:
 - More assistance and resources to LRAs (AMIF and beyond), not only for managing the migration crisis (reception & integration), but also for coping with the side effects of the issue on the longer term.
 - The higher involvement of LRAs in the dialogue and decisions to be taken by the EU and into an EU integrated, multi-level governance solution to play a complementary role to that of national governments.
 - A sustainable and efficient management of migration flows as part of a wider strategy addressing common socio-economic and political challenges in the Mediterranean.
 - A gradual adaptation to migration issues of: territorial cooperation programmes operating in the Med in the current and upcoming programming periods (with a possible global financial share increase) and the future Cohesion Policy in the post 2020 scenario (with increased global funds and specific priorities on migration⁵).
6. **Manifests** the need to further promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the Mediterranean, in particular between refugees and host societies in our Regions (with a focus on the youth).⁶ In that direction, it would be very helpful to make use of the 'toolkit' proposed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe during its 30th session in March 2016, in order to prevent radicalisation at local and regional levels.
7. **Welcomes** the European Parliament resolution of 12th April 2016 addressing the situation in the basin and recognizing the role of regions in the integration of refugees together with the need for humanitarian visas, revision of the Dublin regulation, cooperation with third countries, and additional funding in order to share the responsibility of tackling the migration and refugee issue in particular.
8. **Warns** that, even if it constitutes a potential step forward in the management of the migration crisis and while the approach is willing to address the root causes of migration, the new Migration Partnership Framework, forgets to see the potential role of LRAs in connection with multilevel governance, decentralisation, and territorial partnerships. LRAs shall be involved alongside the States in all processes regarding the new tailor-made "compacts" with third countries.
9. **Commits** to keep working on migration issues in the framework of the renewed Terms of Reference for the CPMR Task force on migration, bearing in mind the Intermediterranean Commission principles agreed in 2014 and the main political messages of the CPMR and the ARLEM on the matter.
10. **Urges** all EU Member-States to empower the role of the UN and especially UNHCR, in order to fully ally their policies with respect to their international legal obligations for protection of refugees and asylum seekers and to take all appropriate measures in order to improve coordination among involved stakeholders;

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, STRATEGIES & INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Concerning the **socio-economic development, decentralisation and cohesion** of the Mediterranean, the v already expressed the need for the "**territorialisation**" of the **EU Neighbourhood policy** and the boosting and setting-up of **macro-regional and sea basin strategies**. In this sense, and in coherence with the action plans of its Working Groups on "Territorial Cooperation & Macroregional Strategies" and "Socio-Economic Cohesion" the Intermediterranean Commission:

11. **Recalls** its recommendations on the future of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its Southern component, included in the CPMR joint answer to the EC Consultation ENP review and the Declaration of Rabat, and reiterates its support and comments to the EC Joint Communication released on the 18th of November 2015.
12. **Insists** on the importance to boost the involvement of LRAs and evaluate the possible adaptation of the ENP to EU Cohesion policy concepts, principles and methodology, linking it with the promotion of emerging macro-regional and sea basin strategies or initiatives (as the emerging "Western Med") and fully exploiting the added value of territorial and decentralized cooperation. In particular, through the works of ENI CBC MED, the Interreg MED Programme's axis 4 and its horizontal projects, and the rest of programmes covering the area.
13. **Enlightens** that a sustainable, harmonious and polycentric development and cohesion in the Mediterranean could take place only through the real application of the concept and model of integrated territorial development. This model of development should be based on sustainability, real decentralisation of powers at territorial level, a democratic and participatory multilevel governance, and an effective integration of all policies and measures having a direct impact on the territory and the citizens as regards:
 - Climate, environment and energy (policies, measures and actions for climate adaptation and mitigation in coastal lines, management of protected areas and ecosystem services, waste & water management, measures for energy efficiency in buildings, promotion of renewable energies, sustainable mobility...)

⁵ that could complete the effectiveness of other EU funds and instruments, involving Regions more directly

⁶ This dialogue would reduce radicalisation while supporting the development of cooperation with the migrants' countries of origin and contribute to build trust and solidarity in a long lasting perspective.

- Socio-economic development promotion & spatial planning (policies, measures and actions for the promotion of sustainable tourism & culture, Social and Solidarity Economy, Urban integrated planning and its relation with regional and national planning, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning, Youth inclusion, training, mobility and education, employment, Green and Blue Economy ...)
 - Migration management (policies, measures and actions for the support of national authorities and communities concerning migrant reception, socio economic integration and intercultural mediation...)
14. **Underlines** that the integrated territorial development model could become a cornerstone for the promotion of territorial diplomacy, cooperation partnerships, and concrete actions or projects that would boost integration at Mediterranean level from the ground as the impact of national and multilateral policies.
 15. **Intends** to pursue the reflections on this model of development and its possible applications through Mediterranean cooperation in the framework of the future activities of the *Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean* and the activities of capacity building in the Neighbourhood South foreseen with Platforma. It also commits to keep working in this field promoting multilevel coordination with its partner organisations as the UfM, CMI and the subnational authorities networks like MedCities, Arco Latino, UCLG-Med Com, towards concrete actions and projects, increasingly involving the participation of southern Med territorial stakeholders.
 16. **Celebrates** the signature of a specific Memorandum of Understanding with MedCities, which formalizes the ongoing cooperation and sets the basis for future joint actions.

EU COHESION POLICY & EFSI

Regarding **EU cohesion policy**, the Intermediterranean Commission notes that the latest regional development statistics show rising levels of disparities between regions in Europe, and confirms the worrying trend that many Mediterranean regions (from Greece and Spain in particular) are falling behind the European average. With this in mind, the Intermediterranean Commission:

17. **Calls** for stronger support from the EU's Cohesion Policy to tackle regional disparities in the future, notably in regions that are still recovering from the effects of the economic crisis. Emerging criticism against the added value of the Cohesion Policy from Member States and the EC call for concerted action at the CPMR, with the support of the Intermediterranean Commission, to safeguard Cohesion Policy as an investment policy for all EU regions in the post-2020 period. Furthermore, concerning its Territorial Cooperation component - and in synergy with the corresponding programmes to be implemented in the Mediterranean in the period post-2020 - it should be considered the setting-up of a new Territorial Cooperation Programme for the Mediterranean islands such as the one already existing for Madeira - Azores - Canary Islands.
18. **Warns** that as currently established, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) will leave some territories of the EU behind, as its intervention logic is solely about boosting investment volume in Europe without any thorough consideration of EU goals for reinforcing economic, social, and territorial cohesion.
19. **Considers** that a closer link with Cohesion Policy, which guarantees the effective involvement of regions, themselves best positioned to trigger investments at territorial level, shall thus be foreseen.

II. BOOSTING BLUE ECONOMY WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EMERGING STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

SUPPORT TO UFM DECLARATION ON BLUE ECONOMY, WEST MED INITIATIVE, AND EUSAIR

The Intermediterranean Commission has already welcomed and expressed its full support to the Declaration following the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy in 2015. It also offered its specific contribution to the follow-up of the works at regional level, in connection with the EP Intergroup Seas, Rivers, Islands & Coastal Areas (SEARICA) and in coherence with the CPMR Maritime Agenda and the COM&CAP MarInA-Med Policy Paper for an Integrated Maritime Approach in the Mediterranean. In this context, the Intermediterranean Commission:

20. **Recalls** that it is fundamental to strengthen the potential of the blue economy in the basin improving at the same time maritime and coastal multilevel governance and planning, preserving the environment from human-exerted pressures or mitigating them, and promoting employment, innovation, and knowledge-based business opportunities through the development of key maritime sectors encompassed in the Blue Growth Strategy.
21. **Celebrates** the decision taken last May 2016 in Turku by the UfM Working Group on Blue Economy to include the CPMR and its Intermediterranean Commission as permanent observer in its Working Group on Blue Economy. The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission looks forward to contributing to these works and to strengthening cooperation with the Secretariat of the UfM in the framework of the existing MoU and towards a concrete contribution to maritime and marine activities.
22. **Welcomes** the last developments concerning the West Med initiative, which set-up is currently being discussed by the relevant state authorities, the EC and the UfM, and advancing well. Also, as it is developed according to

the [ASUR](#) principles and in line with the demands previously expressed by the Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions. The Intermediterranean Commission offers its contribution to the forthcoming activities (reports, events, consultation action plan) as it has already been doing with the help of its members in the framework of the collaborative labs organized in March 2016⁷. The Intermediterranean Commission looks forward to the launch of the initiative (as a pilot for the entire basin) with a direct involvement of LRAs, hopefully in the first semester of 2017 during the Maltese presidency of the EU.

23. **Intends** to contribute to the implementation of the EUSAIR on the ground. It expresses its will to support and strengthen the EUSAIR's governance, and to work to concretize the added value regions can provide. This will be done through concrete advocacy actions and projects to be conceived mainly in the framework of the CPMR Task force on the Adriatic Ionian Strategy and the Intermediterranean Commission Working thematic groups, with a focus on transport⁸, sustainable tourism, the sustainable development of coastal lines, among other important issues like migration management.
24. **Offers** its support, in the framework of the cooperation between the CPMR and the future Maltese Presidency in the 1st semester of 2017, towards the implementation in the basin of the Union's maritime priorities and in particular as regards the West Med, the EUSAIR and other possible emerging initiatives or strategies (including the possibility to contribute to the organisation of high-level events or stakeholder conferences involving the Regions).

MARITIME PRIORITIES TOWARDS EMERGING STRATEGIES & INITIATIVES IN THE MED

The Intermediterranean Commission acknowledges that among the most relevant challenges concerning the maritime sphere in the basin are the reduction of environmental pressures⁹, the balanced development of land-sea interactions and the consolidation of the role of Regions in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). Hence, there is the need to combine all types of maritime investments in order to boost the Blue Economy with environmental protection and mitigation, and an integrated approach to maritime affairs. In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission has already been involved in several projects and activities through its Working Group on "Integrated Maritime Policy and Transport," and produced several technical and political recommendations together with other stakeholders of the basin. Concerning EU and Euromed policies related to maritime affairs and all existing and emerging strategies (the EUSAIR and Western Med initiative in particular), the Intermediterranean Commission:

25. **Recognizes** that the fight against climate change and the preservation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean are priorities to be set at the same level of socio-economic development, and can constitute levers for the Blue economy itself and assets for the resilience of Mediterranean territories. In this frame, the Intermediterranean Commission intends to contribute, capitalize and further work on a wide range of CPMR, Intermediterranean Commission, and members actions as the ones included in the [Annex 1](#) of this political declaration.
26. **Considers** of fundamental importance that the EU provide regions, which are already offering strong support to the maritime economy, with the right set of instruments for boosting maritime investments in the Mediterranean. The current ones (e.g. ERDF, ESF, EMFF, and their synergies with other funds such as H2020 and the ENI) shall be carefully analyzed in order to understand their real territorial impacts. The EMFF, particularly relevant for CPMR and the Intermediterranean Commission Regions, shall be reinforced as a main EU instrument, adjusting the allocation of its resources to the real needs and challenges of various maritime sectors. The strategies affecting the Mediterranean should pay a specific attention to the promotion and synergies among all existing instruments (European and beyond), also exploiting the experience of EU regions concerning smart specialisation strategies linked to ESI funds, as their concepts and methodologies could be adapted and experimented with third countries and territories.
27. **Observes** that for the time being, first feed-back received by the CPMR from the Regions shows that the EFSI (Juncker Plan) does not seem to be widely used in support to the maritime economy. In this sense and in order to see whether more efficient links should be developed between the EFSI, the EU Regional policy and the EMFF in the future for increased impacts on the ground at Med level or not, the Intermediterranean Commission will make sure to contribute to the CPMR assessment of their implementation for the current financial period.
28. **Asks** the EU to strengthen its support to synergies between maritime industrial sectors (e.g. marine energies, shipbuilding) in order to support, together with the regions, the efforts of maritime industries to pursue their strategies of differentiation and diversification. This would allow Europe, especially the Mediterranean sea basin, to keep raising as a leading player in the global maritime economy and developing the right connections with third country operators in the basin. The Intermediterranean Commission will also contribute to cooperation set-up between key organisations such as Ocean Energy Europe and the CPMR.
29. **Acknowledges** and welcomes the impulse of the EU for blue technologies, operationalized within the recent call for proposals launched on the topic. The Intermediterranean Commission will reflect upon the possibility to set-up

⁷ on sustainable tourism, maritime and marine innovation, sustainable maritime transport and MSP, and governance in the Mediterranean

⁸ e.g. reflections and advocacy actions for an effective connection of Balkan regions to the TEN-T corridors, the extension of Scan med corridor in the southern Italian adriatic-ionian coast, actions on sustainable maritime transport and innovative integrated multimodal transport skills services.

⁹ with different situations per eco-regions as manifested by the [MED-IAMER project](#) results but a common worrying trend

synergies with relevant maritime clusters for contributing to a CPMR proposal in this framework or to further possible actions, starting with cooperation with EMBRC as a network of leading European research centers in blue biotechnologies. Exploring ways to facilitate and accelerate strategic public-private initiatives harnessing Blue Growth economic opportunities in the Med in such field shall be a priority for all Med Strategies.

30. **Manifests** the need for EU Institutions to collaborate with Mediterranean regions to monitor the socioeconomic impacts of the Common Fisheries Policy and its external dimension, in connection with issues such as the obligation to land all catches, the link between fisheries and environmental regulations (e.g. MSFD). The Intermediterranean Commission will contribute to the CPMR global reflections on these points and in particular to the analysis of EMFF operational plans implementation at regional level in order to produce thoughts on the future of the CFP. The Intermediterranean Commission also acknowledges the critical contribution of locally co-managed fisheries to CFP delivery, and encourages developing new mechanisms to adequately nest territorial-based management plans run through co-management groups into the general CFP governance scope of large-scale regionalized multi-annual plans and regional-wide ACs.
31. **Warns** that the conflict of uses in the marine and maritime spheres should be solved by the effective implementation of MSP and ICZM, and with the participation of the regions in order to reach a sound balance between the development of emerging and traditional maritime sectors as fisheries.
32. Calls on the EU to support the implementation of a pilot project in the Northwestern Mediterranean, based in the approach of ADRIPLAN in the Adriatic-Ionian Region, in order to start developing a blueprint for MSP in the West Med sub-basin.
33. **Enlightens** the importance of initiatives such as MEDFISH4EVER and calls on Mediterranean Member States to ensure an effective implementation of multi-annual management plans as to enforce their monitoring through the improvement of data gathering campaigns addressing the state-of-play of main commercial fish stocks.
34. **Offers** its collaboration to MED PAN, in view of its Forum of Marine Protected Areas to be organized in Tangiers in November 2016 as an opportunity to draw synergies with Regions about governance and the promotion of ecosystem services in marine protected areas that shall be also considered a priority for all strategies.
35. **Insists** that sustainable tourism should play a pivotal role in Med strategies. In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission intends to contribute to the works on indicators for sustainable maritime & coastal tourism in all sub basins, actions for diversification & de-seasonalisation, cultural tourism itineraries & cross-selling of products, fishing-tourism, branding, relations between tourism and coastal plans related to ICZM and MSP, reflections on cruise tourism.
36. **Suggests** to give a high priority in all Med strategies to the reduction of skill gaps, boosting of training and education in the maritime sectors (e.g. maritime transport and logistics, blue bio technologies, marine renewable energies, fisheries and aquaculture, professional yachting) and welcomes possible initiatives towards the creation of a Med Forum of maritime institutes including the Regions and other stakeholders.
37. **Welcomes** the launch of the EU Blue Careers, which aims at reducing skill gaps and increasing awareness and opportunities for careers in the blue economy, through the development of partnerships between the maritime industry, education and training centers, and the Regions. The Intermediterranean Commission looks forward to the evaluations of the projects submitted to the 1st call and to the launch of the second call for proposals in 2018 envisaging a possible opening for the participation of third countries and with more budget. The Intermediterranean Commission will also keep developing further partnerships with a wide range of EU and Mediterranean maritime institutes, enterprises and organisations in the framework of its spin-off projects linked to the CPMR Vasco da Gama initiative in the Med basin that could be linked to emerging strategies.
38. **Reiterates** the need to accelerate the development and connections of the EU transport corridors linking the Mediterranean with efficient Motorways of the Sea, correctly implementing the actions included in the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean and with a specific attention on improved port infrastructures and services. Besides, the Intermediterranean Commission recalls that the adequate and faster implementation of infrastructures on the Med corridor is vital and functional to the development of the connections with the MoS and to the dynamism of EU and Med economies. In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission recalls the need to keep involving the regions in all the meetings that will be set up for all the corridors' *fora* – and especially in the process of negotiation of its Detailed Implementation Plan, taking into account regional priorities for infrastructures and ramifications. The Intermediterranean Commission highlights the importance that the corridors' *fora* serve as a context for evaluating if CEF results and States investments are aligned with TEN-T priorities and with the compromises for 2030 regarding the core network included in the Regulation (EU) 1315/2013.
39. **Underlines** that will be active in the one-year process of negotiation of the Detailed Implementation Plan for the MoS. In this Plan of Implementation of the Motorways of the Sea, the EU should take into account -as stated in Articles 170.2 and 174 of the EU Treaty- the dependence of the Mediterranean island territories regarding sea transport for their economic, social and territorial development and the role that these territories can play as links between North Africa and the European continent. Therefore, accessibility should be considered as a criterion when selecting projects. As a part of the global work of the CPMR, the Intermediterranean Commission will also monitor the results of the last CEF call linked to the MoS in order to assess the extent to which maritime transport

and the peripheral areas covered by its regions have benefitted from this funding instrument compared to other EU territories. These reflections shall also be beneficial for all emerging Mediterranean strategies or initiatives.

40. **Reaffirms** the importance of [EU cooperation programmes in the Med](#) for boosting the strategies and in particular the actions of the regions on maritime issues as through ADRION, Interreg MED and ENI CBC MED. It also underlines again the importance of effective [communication & capitalisation](#) of the results produced by the projects connected to these programmes to relevant targets, communities, and citizens. The Intermediterranean Commission therefore welcomes and greatly supports the initiative of Interreg MED to launch horizontal projects in order to cope with this need. Another important aspect to bear in mind for the sake of common strategies is the cross-capitalisation of projects and the possible [synergies among the different programmes](#).
41. **Stresses** that all current and future strategies and initiatives in the Mediterranean shall serve for a more efficient [coordination of visions, policies, strategies, funding instruments, players at MED and sub-basin level](#). At the same time, they shall ensure a key role of Regional authorities in decision making together with the States. This aspect is fundamental to ensure coherence between territorial and maritime elements. The mere fact of setting shared objectives within these strategies will help develop policy transfer and capacity building between Med rims for more integration of the area at all levels.

III. A RENEWED COMMITMENT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION

SUPPORT TO “MED COP 22” AND THE “BOLOGNA CHARTER”

The Intermediterranean Commission and its Regions were involved in the process that led to the [Climate Declaration of the Local and Regional elected representatives of the Mediterranean](#), the [MED COP 21](#) in Marseilles and COP 21 in Paris in December 2015. At the same time the Intermediterranean Commission endorsed (formally in 2013) the [“Bologna Charter”](#) on climate change adaptation & mitigation in coastal areas. Following these initiatives, the Intermediterranean Commission:

42. **Calls** for an [effective implementation of the COP21 agreement](#) while opening the path to COP22, concerning actions on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and recommends the authorities to better consider and take stock of the roles and actions of LRAs and the Civil Society in the matter.
43. **Fully supports** the Med COP process and [Med COP Climate 22 event](#), which organisation is led this year by Morocco and the Region of Tangiers, Tétouan, Al Hoceima (Intermediterranean Commission member), to be held in the town of Tangiers on the 18th & 19th July 2016. The Intermediterranean Commission reiterates the importance of the exercise of gathering the overall vision on climate challenges and solutions in the Mediterranean among public, private, scientific and civil society stakeholders in order to be transferred to the COP 22 that will meet in Marrakech in November 2016.
44. **Intends** to support the Med COP Climate 22 in particular by boosting the dissemination of the event and contents, the participation of Regions, and contributing to the works and political messages of the event, amplifying its afterwards communication. It intends to do it capitalizing previous and current reflections and projects, particularly on sustainable development and the protection of coasts and marine areas,¹⁰ water management issues, sustainable transport and tourism, and energy efficiency.
45. **Keeps** supporting and widely promoting the “Bologna Charter” and welcomes the related initiative of the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea Protection setting-up - together with 15 maritime Regions - a [National Board on Coastal Erosion](#) for climate change adaptation & mitigation actions on coastal areas. It backs in particular its aim to extend the Italian initiative in the Mediterranean area through a future and effective cooperation that shall involve other competent Ministries and Regions from other countries dealing with these challenges. In this sense, the Intermediterranean Commission also underlines the importance to raise awareness on these themes in the entire basin and to fully integrate this kind of cooperation in the emerging Mediterranean strategies¹¹.

WATER & ENERGY

Concerning **water and energy issues**, the Intermediterranean Commission is continuing its activities through its dedicated Working Group and internal Task forces. Regarding water and the nexus with renewable energies in particular, the Intermediterranean Commission is developing the reflections started with the [political position](#) on “the Water Framework Directive and the Mediterranean regions” at the end of 2014. It is currently working on updated and specific messages based on the exchange of best practices of its members (to be included in a new policy paper to be released by the end of 2016).

In this perspective, concerning **water and renewable energies** and taking into account that the unlimited access to water as a public and social good, constitutes a basic human right, the Intermediterranean Commission:

46. **Asks** the EU, national and international Institutions to support the Regions in their efforts for improving:

¹⁰ link with the projects capitalized with [MarInA-Med](#)

¹¹ Especially considering joint efforts and cooperation in the development of knowledge and experimentation of innovative solutions, the condition to respond more effectively to the challenges driven by climate change at the basin scale, in particular in coastal areas, whose safety and development opportunities are strictly linked and preconditions to marine and maritime sustainable growth opportunities.

- the full exploitation of regenerated urban water in order to provide the territories with a cheaper hydric resource, able to maximize the nutritive properties of water¹², contribute to the amortisation of the costs of water depuration, and give an additional guarantee of availability to users, while reinforcing water resilience.
- the measures and treatments for water regeneration, the desalination plants together with the use of alternative sources of energy. This would increase water availability, reduce the use of non-renewable energies, contribute to the development of new technologies, the creation of new jobs, and allow the settlement of inhabitants in areas benefitting from water provision.

These measures, supported by additional funding, could contribute to the effective implementation of the objectives of the WFD as well as provide good practices on water management for other non-EU Mediterranean territories.

In the field of **energy** and with a focus on efficiency energy, the Intermediterranean Commission:

47. **Welcomes** the initiative of the [Centre for Mediterranean Integration](#) setting-up a *Mediterranean forum on electricity and climate change*. The Intermediterranean Commission supports its aim to raise awareness on the benefits of Mediterranean energy market integration to support the transition to a low-carbon economy in MENA and Europe, and to disseminate/share knowledge on the issues. The Intermediterranean Commission notably backs up the idea of convening small groups of stakeholders – including regions – around a set of specific [themes](#).
48. **Underlines** that Regions (together with local authorities) play a key role in the implementation of energy savings and efficiency policies. In fact, they are in the best position to know about territorial production infrastructures and the needs of citizens. They can thus have a greater agility when applying funds aimed at implementing these policies, precisely because of their proximity with the territory.
49. **Recalls** the need to boost and coordinate regional strategies for energy renovation in buildings at Mediterranean level and the importance to work in line with the [Ljubljana Declaration](#) and the ELIHMED, MARIE and PROFORBIOMED projects, towards a Joint Action Plan (JAP) on Energy Renovation (ER) in Med buildings and a multilevel governance model. To this extent, the Intermediterranean Commission looks forward to setting-up and implementing the plan and its future priority actions with the help of its Task Force operating on the topic and through EU projects already submitted (under evaluation) led by its regions under the Interreg MED programme.
50. **Asks** the European Commission to foresee mechanisms, systems and concrete measures to:
 - Enhance the role of regions in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the various plans adopted by Member States in relation to the objectives of energy efficiency and savings - resulting from the implementation of Directive 2012/27/EU.
 - Support investments in energy efficiency in regions where the market or financial instruments, such as the EFSI, might not work as expected.
 - Address energy poverty in a homogeneously and multidisciplinary way in the different EU countries and their regions within the scope of the current energy efficiency Directive and also in view of its forthcoming revision.
 - Promote self-consumption at EU and Med levels, favouring a full and balanced development among different EU member countries, allowing the best use of the potential resources of each region, and become a model for similar schemes to be applied in third countries.

Approved unanimously by the General Assembly Veneto 2016

¹² e.g. as fertilizers if the reutilisation is in agriculture