

# Make a Mediterranean area of territories, towns and regions



## SUMMARY

THE EXCEPTIONAL HERITAGE of Mediterranean territories is jeopardized by a number of issues that the region is having trouble controlling. These issues are threatening the potential for tourism and weakening the role that territories play in contemporary economic development. They are: rapid urbanization, excessive coastal development, destabilization of an often isolated rural world, climate change, the unsustainable rise in transport dominated by road transport, growing tourism competition in the world, sub-optimal international logistics that struggle to make the most of proximity, and the lack of local activity in areas disrupted by a modernization in which they play little part. France's DATAR gives the same diagnosis in its Euro-Mediterranean project.

Mediterranean territories therefore make up both a cross-cutting domain involving the region's

agricultural, urban, rural, environmental, economic and social challenges; and a domain for unique potential cooperation that could have enormous long-term economic benefits.

Town and country planning should be promoted as an integrated policy in countries in the region and implemented by state authorities in association with civil society (users) and companies that contribute to territorial development. It could then mobilize infrastructure construction, town planning, architecture, rural development, innovation and clusters sustainably and efficiently. It could interlink local, urban, regional and international levels. The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) could be used to encourage the rise of local stakeholders, local development and "short circuits". Moreover, there should be promotion of culture and foresight, anticipation and long-term planning.

## UFM'S PROPOSITIONS FOR ACTION

1) A strong recommendation is to set up public institutions responsible for urban planning and sustainable land development in all countries in the region. The "Agence villes et territoires durables en Méditerranée" in Marseille could serve as a prototype. These agencies would have three main functions:

- Engineering projects and providing technical assistance to local authorities in the Mediterranean basin;
- Exchanging and capitalizing on experiences of decentralized cooperation;
- Training top-level intermediary territorial managers.

Decisions would be made by public authorities but would be mapped

out in partnership with local authorities, user associations and the companies concerned. In each country, these institutions would promote the rising momentum of regional level as a way of encouraging local territorial activity; a Mediterranean of regions is a necessity that needs to be fostered.

2) A network coordinator ("Association of Mediterranean Towns and Territories Agencies, AMTTA") should be established in a South or East country of the Mediterranean. It would have four departments (central public authorities, local authorities, NGOs and companies), and carry out three functions:

- Stimulating and coordinating the different trans-Mediterranean

networks that focus on spatial activities (land planning agencies, architects, rail transport, ports, etc., drawing from the success of the Baltic region);

- Drawing up a management plan for trans-Mediterranean infrastructures ("Management Plan for the Euro-Mediterranean regional area");
- Providing a secretariat and organizing an annual conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Regional Development.

3) An annual conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Regional Development should be established. This conference would be prepared and followed up by the Association of Mediterranean Towns and Territories Agencies.

## 1. Issues: exceptional heritage but under-developed territories in peril

THE UNIQUE FEATURES and beauty of the Mediterranean territories make this region the leading tourism destination in the world. There are three factors to this exceptional heritage. The first is its dry, but not arid, climate, which is still perfect for varied agricultural production provided that farming practices are sustained (fruit and vegetables, cereal crops, livestock and derived products); and provided that the strategic resource of water is managed properly – in ancient times, farmers chose suitable geological sites and organized village communities around this rare resource.

The second is its topography, where generally low mountains juxtapose with plains or plateaus to shape distinctive countries that have nevertheless always managed to communicate with each other. The third factor is the geography of a maritime basin that has resulted in cultural differentiation and sometimes even confrontation of three continents (“the sea, this true frontier” as Fernand Braudel said) and trade, making the Mediterranean the site where interactions between culture, trade and port activities were for a long time the most fruitful in the world.

These three factors together have formed a whole whose complexity is hard to totally grasp, and yet its unique quality springs to mind at the simple word “Mediterranean”. There are few regions in the world whose geographical and historical features can so fully justify the idea that territories are consolidated time.

Yet this heritage is jeopardized by several challenges that the region is having trouble controlling, and which are not only threatening its potential for tourism but weakening the role that territories play in contemporary economic development:

- Rapid urbanization formerly in Europe and currently to the South and East, occurring without adequate planning control often without provision for essential urban services, with no prior anticipation of risk prevention (e.g. earthquakes, climate, flooding, etc.), and without giving towns a chance to capitalize on the savings resulting from built-up areas that modern development needs;
- Excessive coastline construction, which concentrates in over-exploited territories all the environmental constraints that development cannot fully stamp out, despite the fact that their density is a potential basis for ecologically efficient management;
- Destabilization of an often isolated rural world, especially in SEMCs, where the modernization of

tax and land reform structures is not moving fast enough to cope with transformations in farming issues, and where the planned liberalization of international agricultural exchange risks bringing them up against insurmountable difficulties;

- Climate change, which is starting to weigh down on an already fragile balance and threaten rare resources like water and arable land;
- Non-sustainable rise of transport dominated by road, which is contributing to diluting urbanization, scattering territories, weakening the benefits of urban density and increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- Rising competition for tourism in the world, which the Mediterranean struggles to respond to by being too concentrated on the coastline, not fully developing its cultural, inland and rural heritage, arbitrating badly on the use of water, and insufficiently developing one of its main sectors of activity and employment;
- Sub-optimal international logistics, resulting in slow modernization of ports, insufficient development of intermodal transportation, and a lack of modern, sustainable infrastructures, or put simply, difficulties in making the most of Euro-Mediterranean proximity;
- Lack of local activities in territories disrupted by a modernization in which they play little part, meaning that they cannot play a production factor role like, for example, agricultural territories with Appellations d’Origine Protégée (designation of origin labels), the top innovators like Silicon Valley and Italy’s industrial districts.

In numerous countries in the Mediterranean, people are fighting to preserve ancestral land occupation systems at the same time as modernizing them. Yet they do not always have the tools they need to do so, even though the region as a whole possesses the know-how for tackling this issue together.

Territories therefore make up both a cross-cutting domain in which the region’s agricultural, urban, rural, environmental, economic and social issues play a part; and a domain of unprecedented potential cooperation whose long-term economic benefits could be immense. The Union for the Mediterranean cannot be made without putting in place an ambitious policy for its territories, towns and regions.



## 2. Observation: town and country planning, the missing link in “UFM” projects

**NEED FOR INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL POLICIES.** There is currently no UFM project that deals with planning towns, territories and regions in the Mediterranean, or activating local development. A cross-cutting project is needed because spatial planning requires an integrated policy: towns and territories cannot be reduced to sanitation, roads and town planning schemes. Developing sustainable, productive territories with their own identities calls for coordination between sectorial administrations and strong participation from local authorities, users and operators.

**HIGH DEMAND FOR EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE.** In SEMCs there is high demand for assistance and transferring knowledge to attempt to tackle over-rapid transformations that are disturbing territories, habitats and transport. Reciprocally, in the North there is increasing demand to make use of the kind of expertise that uses little resources (water and heating) that architects and local communities in the South have managed to conserve. The future experiences of towns and the countryside in Morocco, Turkey, Spain and Greece are unknown to authorities and elected parties in other countries of the region. There is an obvious need for a place to exchange experience on territorial public policies in the Mediterranean.

**POLICIES THAT ANTICIPATE PLANNING TO COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE.** Problems linked to climate change will increasingly penalize any lack of anticipation; desertification may reclaim land and lead to saturated coastlines threatened by flooding as sea levels rise. We must therefore, together, envisage concerted land planning operations at the level of the entire Mediterranean basin.

**NEED FOR THOUSANDS OF SCIENCE PARKS AND CLUSTERS TO CREATE MILLIONS OF JOBS.** For economic development, 50 million jobs will have to be created in SEMCs over the next twenty years. These positions will for the most part need to be created in competitiveness clusters and science parks – which means that politicians and local authorities will have to make concerted efforts to create an environment that can produce external economies likely to be attractive to FDI and young professionals keen to work in an innovating economic environment.

**THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME IN SEMCS CALLS FOR STRONG COORDINATION.** Major infrastructure needs (water, sanitation, transport, energy, housing, etc.) in SEMCs are estimated at 300 billion Euro over the next twenty years. It is hard to imagine that these sectorial programmes could be carried out without regional coordination, nor that individual countries and major operators could be left to act as they choose on their own.

**DEEP-SEATED TREND TOWARDS LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND “SHORT CIRCUITS”.** There is evidence of a deep-seated trend towards devolution, decentralization and regionalization. Increasingly, local stakeholders are the contracting parties responsible to central authorities and citizens. This trend has been facilitated by the arrival of technologies adapted to local development, like wind farms, photovoltaic solar power and desalinization, which make “short circuits” possible. The same goes for developing agricultural practices for quality farming that preserves the environment, through the development of more local distribution (e.g. for school canteens, company restaurants, tourist and local city markets). Short circuits are a structural movement of emancipation, innovation and preservation of the environment, which in some domains complete the work of the state. Countries and peoples of the Mediterranean are already participating in this historic evolution, but they need to accelerate it.



## 3. Objectives

- Unblock central government, mobilize skills in local development, sustainable town planning and territorial development. Three important stakeholders who never meet, i.e. the government (ministers of transport, land planning and agriculture, etc.), local authorities and major companies, should be able to work together on structuring projects;
- Make state policies more territorial by organizing them inter-sectorially on a territorial basis;
- Organize town planning agencies into a Euro-Mediterranean network and create them where they do not exist, put local administrations and authorities into networks, create a network of Mediterranean ports, transport operators, etc.;



- Better coordinate, at Euro-Mediterranean level, the different sectorial programmes (e.g. energy, transport, telecommunications) to interlink our common region and facilitate associations between local, national and international projects.

The combined effect of these trends would result in the creation of territories that are attractive to private companies, innovative for young professionals, and durable and stimulating for all citizens.

#### 4. Propositions

WE MAKE THREE CONNECTED propositions to the Heads of state and government, to give strong political impetus to the cross-cutting, multidisciplinary domains that towns, Mediterranean land planning and local development represent:

1) Encourage agencies for sustainable towns and territories to be set up in all countries in the region. France will create a prototype in Marseilles bringing together the skills of DATAR, AFD, CDC, the PACA region and the major towns in that region; the French agency will be active in training, project expertise and capitalizing on experience; it will be strongly oriented towards Mediterranean countries. Other national experiments will be developed by bringing together central and local state authorities, user associations, and land planning companies. These will work on encouraging the continued momentum of a regional level in partnership with the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM).

2) Create a leading agency to oversee the network of national agencies. This could be called the Association of Mediterranean Towns and Territories (AMTT) and would be a genuine discussion and exchange apparatus. The AMTT could be located in a country South or East of the Mediterranean (perhaps Tunisia, since it makes obvious efforts in this domain?). It would be a coordination structure and comprise four departments (central public authorities, local authorities, NGOs and companies). It would have five functions:

- Training top-level intermediary territorial managers;
- Exchanging and capitalizing on experiences of decentralized cooperation;
- Stimulating and coordinating the various trans-Mediterranean networks that focus on spatial activities (e.g. the Euromed network of town planning agencies “Med Urba”, “UMAR” architects, “Med-Fer” rail transports, ports, etc., drawing from the success of the Baltic region);
- Promoting structuring projects (e.g. links between local, national and international levels), with technical assistance from local authorities and appraisal of projects before they are submitted to UFM’s General Secretariat;
- Drawing up a management plan for trans-Mediterranean infrastructures (“Management Plan for the Euro-Mediterranean regional area”);
- Providing a secretariat and organizing an annual conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Regional Development.

3) An annual conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Regional Development should be established. This conference would be prepared and followed up by the Association of Mediterranean Towns and Territories.



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