

PAMEx - The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030
World Conservation Congress – Marseilles
Parc Chanot Hall 8, Salle “Mer de Corail” - September 3rd 2021 - h. 1 4.00

PAMEx - PRESENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN:
AXIS 4, PROMOTE MARITIME TRANSPORT PRACTICES WHICH PROTECT THE
MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

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Vice-President of the Sicilian Regional Government - Presidency of CPMR Intermediterranean Commission

Honourable Ministers, colleagues and dear participants,

I am honoured to participate this meeting today on behalf of Sicilian Government and of Presidency of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission.

More specifically, I am pleased to represent the regional governance level over the Mediterranean through the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission. Our network has been associated to the process of *the One Ocean Initiative* promoted by France since the beginning, and for this, I would also like to congratulate you all for all the efforts and collaboration that have been performed to reach this Action plan proposal for the *Mediterranean to be a model sea by 2030*.

The CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, as you know, gathers around 40 Member Regions from 9 different EU members states and other countries (Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia). It is open to all the different sub-national levels in all Mediterranean countries. The Intermediterranean Commission work focuses on the development of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and territorial cooperation, concentrating its efforts on Transport and Integrated Maritime Policy, Economic and Social Cohesion, Water and Energy. Today, it is calling for a macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean and fostering the emergence of Mediterranean citizenship – also on migration policies – mobilising partners from the southern rims of the basin too with two aims: 1) defending the interests of the Mediterranean Regions in key EU policies; 2) incorporating the territorial concept and the role of the regional authorities in the

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Euro-Mediterranean concept; 3. undertaking strategic “pilot” projects on key themes with a forceful territorial impact

Regional and local government levels are, indeed, of utmost importance to consider if we want initiatives at national and intergovernmental levels to be successfully implemented. Today more than ever, and following the publication this summer of the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change’s report* (the *IPCC report*), action is needed to tackle challenges posed by human activity on the evolution of climate.

At CPMR, our *REGIONS ACT!* Initiative has allowed us to map various aspects on which our administrations have been working to fulfil the European Green Deal objectives and to foster the exchange of best practices. The Initiative, a survey of CPMR member regions, aimed at gathering data from regions on their ambition and engagement on climate action, and thus the contribution of CPMR members to meeting the targets of the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement. A survey conducted by the CPMR shows that 37% of CPMR member regions have a higher ambition than the 2050 European Union climate neutrality target, which is matched by actions already being implemented on the ground.

The CPMR Member Regions are at the forefront of the growing and worsening impacts of climate change: sea-level rise, coastal flooding, droughts, heavy rains and floods and forest fires are already impacting their territories, economies and citizens. Maritime and peripheral Regions are already implementing mitigation and adaptation measures, and mobilising investments to counter the consequences and threats of climate change, which are even more critical to islands and outermost regions. However, not all Regions are impacted the same way and do not face the same challenges. Tailor-made solutions to the territories are needed as well as full ownership. Furthermore, not all regions start from the same point or have the same capacity to respond. Some regions are already on track to become climate neutral before 2050, whilst others, such as

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outermost regions as underlined in the European Green Deal, have specific vulnerabilities that need to be taken into account and consequently need to be supported in the transition.

In particular the Policy Position approved by the CPMR General Assembly on 18 October 2019 in Palermo, pointed out that the European Climate Pact should inspire a new initiative to strengthen the mobilisation of all European Union investments in support to climate action at territorial level. This initiative could include the development of synergies between the regions' investment priorities, particularly in the context of their smart specialisation strategies, with the main programmes of the European Union, including Horizon Europe, as well as with the European Investment Bank. Beyond this, such an initiative should lead to proposals for new and innovative mechanisms to channel EU investments in support to territorial climate actions policies implemented with the regions.

Conclusions notably highlight that Regions are acting via their mitigation and adaptation measures with an integrated and place-based approach to deliver a climate neutral and resilient future. That is the reason why for the Mediterranean as for Europe, Regions must be seen as key partners in the fight against climate change and be fully involved in the design and implementation of policies for the ecological transition of territories.

To give you an example, regarding greener ports and maritime transport in my Region – since this is the theme of this part of the panel indeed – it is to be noted that small islands such as Sicily face particular challenges in the transition to a carbon neutral economy.

The grid interconnection with Sicily, as well as transition to less impacting energy generation technologies (power to gas, biogas, LNG) represent the biggest challenges and costs. Indeed, this transition needs to be achieved in an integrated way, taking into consideration all the other sectors that are interacting on the

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territory, such as those of tourism and mobility, which are also major sources of energy consumption in Sicilian islands.

The Sicilian seaport network is the subject of important interventions to improve the level of ecological sustainability through the reconstruction from scratch or the completion of existing ports that aim to achieve a quantitative and qualitative improvement of service levels while respecting the highest ecological standards. The objective is to decarbonise the energy sector, which accounts for 75% of polluting emissions in relation to the entire industrial production system, rethinking mobility, responsible for 25% of pollutant emissions on the island, in terms of sustainability and with a view to saving energy.

To this end, the process of decarbonisation of the Sicilian seaport system has been launched, starting from the ports of Syracuse and Gela, through the construction of infrastructures that make possible the electrification of consumption deriving from ship traffic.

These projects are based on "*cold ironing*" systems, namely the set of technologies through which it is possible to supply energy to ships during their stay in port, through an electrical connection with the mainland, thus allowing the zeroing of pollution and emissions from ships in port.

In this sense, it also becomes unavoidable to activate and support multi-level governance to a further extent in the Mediterranean if we want to fulfil our climate objectives. And the same goes for a more integrated governance – as I just explained. This way, Regions are provided enough leeway to use European and public funds as they see fit to address the sectors where there is most need to affect change.

In any case the relationship between the Green Deal and economic recovery is not necessarily competitive or conflictual. Arguably, the upcoming political and economic response to the crisis provides an opportunity to make policy choices that prioritise the energy transition.

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The Sustainable Development Goals should be met leaving no one and no place behind. Cohesion policy will be an essential instrument for countries, regions, and municipalities to make progress towards the SDGs through its multi-level and multi-stakeholder implementation approach and investments in strengthening people’s skills, creating job opportunities, fighting poverty and social exclusion, supporting small and medium enterprises, as well as addressing major global issues such as climate change and migration. Regional and local governments must ensure cohesion policy programmes bring about the best outcomes for sustainable development and the localization of the SDGs, turning the 2030 Agenda into reality across Europe.

Lastly, I would like close my intervention with a short observation.

Green and sustainable (blue) economy starts from the beginning of the value chain. It is necessary to rethink our approaches to the economy. For example, at the scale of the Mediterranean, by further developing social and solidarity economy as well as circular economy, with an inter sectoral application.

This means also to support local distribution networks and consumption, shift paradigms regarding finance by supporting and implementing initiatives such as the Sustainable blue economy finance principles, use material that are gathered, built and sold “locally” across the EU and the Mediterranean to the best possible extent. All in all, this will also contribute to making maritime transport and ports greener, and therefore become key parts of the equation for climate neutrality.

Becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent requires a change in government policies, business strategy and consumer behavior. The EU Next Generation Fund requirement to devote at least 37% of all national recovery and resilience plans to climate-positive initiatives represents a unique opportunity for governments to ensure a green recovery and to support concrete plans and promote sustainable practices through lighthouse projects, a series of action-oriented and

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cross-sectoral initiatives aimed to tackle decarbonization in sectors as varied as food and agriculture, real estate, infrastructure and skills

The regions has an important opportunity and obligation to come together to create sustainable, inclusive growth for current and future generations.

I thank all participants for their kind attention.