

POLICY DECLARATION ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIP IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

ENPI, IPA as well as the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy will represent **a new framework of opportunities** capable of triggering an enhanced political role for Mediterranean regions and local authorities. Nevertheless, the exploitation of these opportunities will depend on **the active participation of regions and local authorities in the process of creating effective partnerships for building development, democracy and peace** in the Mediterranean countries.

To this end, the partners of the COMPART project

recommend:

- **Opening up the access of** stakeholders to the joint programming process and to project formulation, through the establishment of **new communications instruments, of working groups on specific issues** and, more generally, through the application of a more proactive strategy towards the territories in question;
- Increasing **institution and capacity-building** of the various stakeholders (especially of small cities and rural local authorities);
- Negotiating the **concentration of CBC resources in integrated projects** in order to improve the impact on sustainable development in the Mediterranean;
- **Integrating** CBC projects into local/regional and national development plans, sharing strategies with central governments from the outset and opening up local networks to the participation of central actors;
- Promoting **city-to-city cooperation** networks and the **participation of rural areas**, according to the principles of territorial cohesion and polycentric development; and
- Ensuring greater **participation of political representatives in CBC programmes** and promoting new modes of governance, for example, through the creation of **Medregions**;

and **request a political commitment from central governments
and the European Commission** to:

- **open up** access of stakeholders to the multi-level and joint programming process through the setting up of **new communications instruments and of multi-level working groups on specific issues**;
- support initiatives for the **institution and capacity-building** of the various stakeholders, and in particular establish **a specific twinning sub-programme** within the CBC

programmes to support the active involvement of **geographically remote stakeholders and small and rural cities** and the creation of networks;

- **complement and coordinate** with multilateral (for instance, the UNDP Art Gold Mediterranean programme), bilateral and decentralised cooperation programmes;
- **improve programming methodology** to increase the participation of local stakeholders and the sharing of objectives through specific territorial diagnostic analysis and the facilitation of networking between territorial actors;
- support territorial cohesion and polycentric development principles, establishing a **criterion** which gives **preference** to CBC projects which involve **outlying territories and their stakeholders** significantly;
- **make serious efforts to feed back results of (ex-post) evaluations into future planning phases**. In this regard, the creation of **thematic multi-level working groups** to monitor and evaluate actions and to feed the results back into planning could be encouraged;
- **strengthen the governance and coordination capacities of Steering Committees on strategic programming and monitoring/evaluation**, in order to develop results-oriented CBC. In order to achieve this aim, regular and **periodic multi-level conferences** could be held for each joint programme, to raise the political profile of the partnership, strengthen the ownership of CBC outcomes and identify strategic actions to be implemented; and
- **support CBC** by strengthening **the link** between territorial cooperation and national development plans and by encouraging **decentralisation reforms through** dedicated policy and pragmatic dialogue between EU Member States and the central governments of Mediterranean partners.