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March 2013

STRENGTHENING FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR BLUE GROWTH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH COASTAL REGIONS

This policy position aims to express a combination of political elements approved by the Political Bureau of the CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission (IMC), and based on the findings of the **MAREMED** project (www.maremed.eu)¹.

¹ Maremed was developed in the framework of the InterMediterranean Commission of the CPMR. It is led by Region Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur (FR), and involves Regions from 5 Countries in the Mediterranean area, and the CPMR General Secretariat. The political messages expressed in this policy position are grouped around the main thematic addressed in the framework of the Maremed project.

STRENGTHENING FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR BLUE GROWTH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH COASTAL REGIONS

Coastal Regions, strategic partners in the new phase of Integrated Maritime Policy

Over the last few years, the Integrated Maritime Policy and EU maritime sectoral policies made significant steps forward, which are reflected in the Limassol declaration, the assessment of the IMP, and in EC proposals concerning the future of EU policies post-2014, which are currently under negotiation. The blue growth approach is now at the heart of this dynamic and interacts with all EU maritime policies².

In this context, Regions stress that:

- All EU policies in relation to the Sea are to implement a balanced approach encompassing the economic, social and environmental dimensions under a blue growth perspective.
- Issues addressed in this policy position, such as ICZM, adaptation to climate change, marine data and anti-oil pollution are part of key framework conditions that are a prerequisite of “blue growth”. These issues are today encompassed in the blue growth approach and must remain at the heart of it.
- An integrated approach to the management of coastal territories is also a prerequisite of “blue growth” development and of an efficient implementation of EU maritime policies in general. Coastal Regions are best-placed to play a key role in regard to this. In this new phase of Integrated Maritime Policy, it is therefore also necessary to reaffirm, as a principle but also very explicatively in the regulatory and budgetary instruments associated with EU policies, the involvement of Regional authorities as major political partners in the development of EU Integrated Maritime Policy and in maritime thematic policies. In this perspective, the analysis, relevance and content of EU policies should be assessed before their adoption, but also in the course of their implementation in light of their consequences on territories, both in terms of the socio-economic impact and in terms of governance in light of the necessary efficient policy interaction with the Regions. The implementation of EU policies shaped without sufficiently, clearly and officially taking into account these aspects is often problematic, if not unsuccessful, since Regions are, in the end, often asked to take responsibility for the effective implementation of EU policies in most of the areas mentioned in this document.
- Obviously, the Regions and the socio-economic stakeholders of their territories need to have strong budgetary resources within the next EU financial programming period to achieve objectives on the ground in line with issues addressed in this policy position. This implies strong attention to the current negotiation process and to be able to organise specific synergies between EU funds that are part of the Common Strategic Framework (encompassing the Structural Funds together with other EU funds), Funds of the Common Strategic Framework for innovation and research (Horizon 2020, Cosme), of the EIB and of national and regional levels.
- In this perspective, it would be necessary for the earmarking of the Structural Funds to leave enough latitude to invest in framework conditions for blue growth in line with the issues addressed in the policy position.
- In parallel, harmonised “coastal” terminology could help the coherence of investments made through future regional Operational Programmes across Regions. That would help to organise joint territorial projects among neighbouring regions for more efficiency in coastal management.
- In parallel, the maritime basins should be promoted as a suitable level of governance for the management of the IMP. The “basin” and “sub basin” concepts (namely linked to a homogeneous geographical area like the Adriatic, the western part of the Mediterranean) are a technical necessity to open reflections on coastal and maritime issues. Again, Regions should be considered as full partners in the development of maritime basins strategies.

² See Assessment of the IMP, encompassing all EU maritime policies under the Blue Growth approach.



- Further develop and consider the feasibility of macro-regional approaches across the Mediterranean basin, such as the definition of a European macro-regional Mediterranean strategy in which the maritime dimension could constitute a major focus.
- At this stage, structuring initiatives which are developed at the level of the Mediterranean basin can contribute to the future development of a European macro-regional Mediterranean strategy. In this regard, the Bologna Charter is particularly interesting as a strong and efficient way to promote joint political initiatives in the field of marine and coastal areas. The Bologna Charter both reflect and can stimulate structuring European projects across the Mediterranean like Maremed, Shape, Beachmed...and to network them in a process of clusterisation as with the example of Facecoast.
- Action should also be undertaken in order to ensure better synergies between EU MED and ENPI programmes on projects concerning specific maritime thematic.

Relying on Regions for the upcoming EU initiatives concerning Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning

Over the last years, coordination of public policies in the field of ICZM was strengthened in the Mediterranean area through the follow-up of the 2002 EU Recommendation on ICZM and the adoption of the Protocol for ICZM³ in the Mediterranean Area. A debate is currently taking place concerning a new European initiative that the EC is proposing concerning both ICZM and MSP.

In this context, Regions stress that:

- The organisation of the coexistence of human activities in coastal areas requires a holistic and integrated coastal management approach that is able to balance economic development (“blue growth”), social welfare and environmental protection, which are interrelated.
- The implementation of the concept of multi-level governance in the context of ICZM, must be supported by promoting the participation and the role of the Regions. The Regions are better able to develop concrete actions and have a central role and skills of management in this regard.
- In the definition of the “coastal zone”, it should be taken into account a flexibility approach (“coastal zone of influence”) depending on the related problems (e.g. erosion, submersion risk, land management, environment and biodiversity protection) in the different /specific geographical contexts.
- The difficulties of achievement, beyond the different administrative organization in the different contexts of the Mediterranean, are mainly given by the lack of specific financial resources dedicated to the implementation of ICZM.
- The implementation of ICZM and MSP must be carried on in an integrated manner, (the land-sea interface must be considered a key element, not “separation element” between the marine and coastal ambits) and with a strong “cooperation” connotation: transnational, cross-border and interregional cooperation.
- The European Commission should encourage and enhance the role of Regions in the implementation of the integrated vision and management of the coastal territories and of the maritime space of competence. In this perspective, new initiatives to be taken at Community level should ensure a strong and concrete involvement of the Regions.

Putting coastal areas at the heart of the EU Strategy for adaptation to climate change

The defense of the coastal zone against climate change is a major challenge for Europe and in particular for Mediterranean countries. Indeed, coastal tourism and economy are based on the stability and safety of the economical tools represented by beaches, ports and the land and sea interface.

³ The Madrid Protocol of 21 January 2008 introducing the ICZM in the Mediterranean Area in the framework of the Barcelona Convention

In this context, Regions stress that:

- Due to their competences in the management of the regional economy, environment and territories, the Regions are fully responsible and involved in the preservation of the integrity of the coast, the beaches, the coastal ecosystems and the European Commission must take into account their needs and experiences regarding the local approaches in the implementation of the upcoming EU strategy for adaptation to climate change. In parallel, specific characteristics concerning coastal areas must be placed at the heart of this strategy.
- It is necessary to promote the development of innovative methods to preserve this coastal zone, which is a major challenge of the coastal economy. In order to do this, the networking of observatories across the Mediterranean must increase the capacity of prevision and calibration of the protections needed.
- We must develop territorial modeling exercises linked to climate change and the impacts of extreme weather events and the evaluation of the damages when preservation of the coastal integrity is not organised.
- We need to foresee future joint projects involving coastal communities on adaptation to climate change. Intercomplementarity between projects is essential. The launching of macro-projects is also very relevant in order to embrace all the topics at stake within coastal territories. The clusterisation of the projects like Facecoast initiative is a first step in the reflection.
- The promotion of the “Bologna Charter 2012” should give rise to a macro-project on these issues for the next programming period of the European Structural Funds (2014-2020).
- In this regard, it is necessary to foster major trans-regional political initiatives like the “Bologna Charter 2012” in order to define the common strategy of coastal regions, the basis for cooperation between the Mediterranean regions in terms of policies related to ICZM and MSP, coastal adaptation to climate change and mitigation of risk from coastal flooding, erosion and marine ingression.
- Moreover, the role of regional authorities in raising public and local stakeholders awareness on the prevention of natural hazards, in particular concerning erosion and coastal flooding (tools that help decision-making, for example the development of methodological guides for local stakeholders..) should be emphasised too.

Strengthening the role of the Regions in the definition and implementation of the future EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Although fisheries, aquaculture and shellfish farming play a strategic socio-economic role in Mediterranean coastal Regions by supporting “blue growth” and ensuring sources of direct and indirect employment, over the last ten years these key sectors have been facing strong challenges (high competition for access to maritime space and to healthy marine ecosystems, impact of climate change on fish stocks, decline of catches, reduction of economic resilience, etc), which differ according to the EU basin where these sectors operate.

To cope with these deep-rooted problems, the upcoming Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) will have to preserve and develop fishing and aquaculture industries by creating conditions to ensure their competitiveness as well as their environmental, economic and social sustainability.

According to the specific reality of fisheries, aquaculture and shellfish farming existing in the Mediterranean area, the recommendations hereafter aim to provide European policy-makers with political and technical content to better shape the next CFP as well as its 2014-2020 financial instruments.

In this context, the Regions stress:

- the need for a Regionalisation of the upcoming CFP which should allow:
 - The implementation of a new multilevel governance through which fishermen, producers’ organisations (POs), inter-branch organisations, scientists and public stakeholders contribute in concrete terms to the CFP decision-making process;

- Regions to join Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) as **full members**;
 - Member States to develop, or not develop, a **regionalised management** of the future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
 - A few general and well-defined rules to be set through EU operational programmes, by providing local development strategies with more flexible implementation tools, which are finely-tuned to local specific characteristics and requirements and characterised by a simplification of administrative procedures;
- Recall the difficulties related to the backlog that has accumulated over the past few years in collecting data on the different stocks fished as well as the significant time lag between the period in which data is gathered and analysed, the elaboration of stock assessments and therefore the recommended management proposals by researchers. The MAREMED Partnership underlines that an effective implementation of the CFP firstly depends on the availability and reliability of fisheries data;
 - Recall that fleet size in the Mediterranean has drastically decreased in the last 10 years, but this has not led to the expected benefits in terms of overcapacity decrease and reduction of catches. Mediterranean countries are characterised by old fleets; the lack of appropriate measures for fleet renewal and modernisation aimed at reducing environmental impacts, increasing fishing selectivity and facilitating differentiation of activities, the absence of a strategic vision for young generations in order to enhance generational renewal, are all critical issues that will encourage many fishermen to step out of the sector;
 - Are concerned about the decision of the EU Parliament⁴ to set, in the short term, the necessary conditions in terms of scientific expertise to provide a reliable estimate, by 2015, of certain “...*fishing mortality rates that will allow fish stocks to recover, by 2020 at the latest, levels above those capable of attaining MSY*”, and is concerned about the socio-economic impacts that such a measure will generate, mainly affecting mixed fisheries (phenomenon of “choke species”). There have been many objections to the EC proposal of calibrating multispecies MSY on the most threatened species. In the Mediterranean, the MSY should be determined for groups of species according to fishing systems, seasons and areas, and should have a margin of flexibility. Direct resource assessment methods are identified as the most suitable alternative to MSY in order to determine catch quotas, provided that local abundance and density data are integrated over space and time to obtain a reliable picture of stock status and trends;
 - Although the practice of discards is unacceptable, the obligation of landing all catches poses a certain number of (socio-economic) problems, especially regarding Mediterranean mixed fisheries. MAREMED considers that the encouragement of selective fishing practices is one of the main solutions to achieve the target of “zero discards”, especially considering that Mediterranean food habits make it possible to profit from even small and less-valuable fish; limiting quotas or minimum-size measures to those cases which are strictly necessary can indeed lead to discard reduction;
 - Welcome the general guidelines regarding Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFC) adopted at their first reading by Member States and the EU Parliament. However, MAREMED underlines that a fisheries management model based on a TFC system is in general not appropriate and recommended for the Mediterranean context, where Regional fleets are mainly small-scale, with small fishing vessels commonly catching a wide variety of species using different⁵ types of fishing gear⁵;
 - Recall, that the management of fisheries at local level is of the utmost importance in the Mediterranean sea, where traditions play a fundamental role in shaping the fisheries sector. Management Plans could be an effective tool for the development of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable fisheries policies, also by means of multiannual planning tools. In addition, Management Plans allow fishermen to become more responsible and to be more directly involved in the planning process with a bottom-up approach. Management consortia have proved to be a particularly appropriate tool, in sharing a common

⁴ RODUST's report: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy 2011/0195 COD.

⁵ See MAREMED Recommendation Paper on the applicability of a management model based on Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFC) in the Mediterranean sea.

goal. For a management plan to be effective, it must draw together all actors and stakeholders which are relevant for the safeguard, sustainable exploitation and management of a specific marine area. For this reason, the ideal Managing Body in the Mediterranean is based on a transversal governance concept and composed of all coastal community stakeholders (fishermen consortia, local organisations and bodies, scientists, etc). More generally, it would be good to develop specific management tools with a multi-level approach, moving from the Regional to the national and transnational level, also enhancing cooperation with non-European countries for an effective multi-annual management of shared stocks;

- Recall that in the Mediterranean basin the fishing tourism sector is still in its infancy. It considers that to harness such an underexploited industry, concrete changes must be introduced into the EU legislative framework as well as the development synergies developed with the tourism sector, the creation of stronger and long-lasting networks, the enhancement of promotion and publicity actions, education and training of fishermen, allocation of funds for renewal and adaptation of vessels to be devoted to fishing tourism. MAREMED calls on the Trilogue to create a standard judicial basis on which each Member State can base its independent legislation on fishing tourism. ,;
- Welcome the recent position adopted by the EU Parliament, widening a definition of small-scale fishing which takes account of a range of criteria in addition to boat size, including, inter alia: the prevailing weather conditions, the impact of fishing techniques on the marine ecosystem, the time spent at sea and the characteristics of the economic unit exploiting the resource;

Concerning the new European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the Regions:

- Although welcoming the introduction in the upcoming EMFF of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) and the allocation of specific funding for this policy, underline that European intervention in favour of fisheries and aquaculture must remain a priority in the context of the new fund;
- Underline the importance of re-examining the definition of small-scale fisheries, taking into account of its importance for the Mediterranean regions;
- Welcome proposals made by the European Commission in order to ensure the funding of certain measures such as:
 - ✓ support for innovation in different segments of the European fisheries sector;
 - ✓ strengthening of partnerships between scientists and fishermen;
 - ✓ encouragement for the transfer of knowledge;
 - ✓ continued funding for innovation and safety equipment;
 - ✓ continued funding, with conditions, for port investments;
- Underline the need to grant financial support for the replacement or modernisation of main or auxiliary engines;
- Consider that more emphasis needs to be placed on technical approaches, such as avoidance, minimisation and incentive measures, as a solution to more sustainable fisheries management;
- Underline that measures in favour of safety on board will only be effective if accompanied by measures in favour of vessel renewal based on sustainability criteria;
- Concerning local development strand (former Axis 4), recall that the experience of the EFF (2007-2013) in the Mediterranean area has enabled MAREMED Regions to identify a certain number of guidelines for the future:
 - ✓ the perimeter of fisheries-dependent areas should be more coherent from a territorial point of view and not fall below a certain critical size;
 - ✓ the means dedicated to management should be allocated on a basis other than a percentage of the overall envelope;



- ✓ the governance of Fisheries Local Action Groups should be based with the local authorities, in order to guarantee transparency of management and to benefit from their experience in managing public finance. Coordination with local and regional development strategies and plans would thus also be facilitated.

For better promotion, acquisition, interoperability and accessibility of coastal and maritime data

For the elaboration, application and evaluation of the European maritime policies, the existence of updated, interoperable and shared data is a basic tool. It is also a motor of innovative capacities in integrated management and protection of coastal zones.

In this context, Regions stress that:

- Regions and other levels of governance should be considered by European institutions and National authorities as operational producers and users requiring reliable data for the implementation of land and coastal territory management policies.
- The acknowledgment of the need of regional bodies at the maritime basin level for the management of data would represent a breakthrough in operational common data management and in sea basins scale planning and would contribute to a real awareness of all stakeholders on this “umbrella” topic.
- Sharing spatial data is of utmost importance. The maritime regions of Europe have created GIS to help refine and conduct their policies on their territories. These GIS are often developed independently of each other and in major cases, without a national framework (this is beginning in Italy). It is therefore necessary to promote the interoperability of these regional systems at transnational level and the use of a transnational budget to do it.
- Territorial data provided by Regions, because of their accuracy and precision, can be used also at national and European scale; the opposite is mostly not possible.
- Interoperability of data is essential in so far as they form the basis of technical and scientific understanding of the phenomena and guide decisions relating to the management of territories, economies, and coastal and marine ecosystems must be emphasised.
- European initiatives regarding marine data and GIS and their interoperability with those developed at regional level should be strengthened.
- Regions are also producing data that is often collected unrelated to scientific programmes (without integrating the scientists’ circuits) and the creation of dialogue forums between these communities is a necessity.
- Providing financing support through European programmes and funds for training local managers to use data for territorial management is a necessity.
- Data and databases created in the framework of EU projects or with EU financial support, must be saved at EU level, for example in EMODNET and with interoperable guidelines.

Strengthen the land-based component of the fight against oil-pollution

Each day the Mediterranean receives silent major pollution, with the danger of seeing the oil cause a lot of damage to the coastal zones.

In this context, Regions stress that:

- The important efforts made by the EU to survey, prevent and fight against these pollutions and the pooling of means and the alert chain put in place at EU level are welcome.
- A lot of European projects are dedicated to the fight against this risk at sea, with the competent States’ offices.

- However the attention of the EU Commission must be kept on the fact that when the oil arrive close to, and on, the beach, the local governments are responsible for the safety and integrity of goods and people. With small and medium scale of pollution, the means of the States are not deployed automatically and we need to prepare local actors, including the elected representatives responsible, with training and exercises.
- In the framework of the next EU 2014-2020 financial programming period it will be necessary to take into consideration these needs of the land-based component of the fight against pollution in terms of preparation; the importance of allowing mutual assistance between Mediterranean territories by organising simulation exercises in logical areas for the distribution of pollution in the Mediterranean zones like the Adriatic, the north-western Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, the Strait of Gibraltar, the zone of “Cyprus Lebanon, Syria Turkey” ..

The Regions also point out the importance of having common terminology and interoperable materials among local authorities around the Mediterranean to be able to give assistance in case of major pollution.

For more flexibility in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the Mediterranean

Regions stress that:

- The criticalities for the implementation of the WFD in Mediterranean countries are at technical, financial and administrative levels. A better allocation of funds could help to solve many issues and to duly fulfill the WFD requirements. Indeed, it would be good if the WFD itself included a specific Financial Planning Section, so that the allocation of financial resources could be more easily carried out at national and Regional level. Effectively, there is often a “governance” problem, when competences are transferred from the EU to national and Regional level, but the same thing is not carried out for funding.
- Partnerships (Regions-States) should be reinforced in order to confer solid financial resources to local authorities for an effective management and to rationalise water governance processes between Member States at a pertinent geographic scale such as sea basins.
- On the basis of diagnosis and the subsequent surveys carried out, it appears that WFD was realised without taking fully into account the huge differences between countries that don't have droughts or water scarcity problems and those countries that encounter severe scarcity, hydric stress and lack of water resources. These countries have historical conflicts for water distribution, especially Spain, which depends on water transfers between rivers, which complicates the adoption of suitable river basin management plans.
- Water policies in Mediterranean basins should be different than in the Atlantic or Northern basins. The notion of anthropogenic pressures, basin scales, must take into account more particular Mediterranean cases. Water scarcity suggests a different management model. The same premises could not be applied to such different conditions between countries with water abundance and those suffering severe hydric stress.
- Due to the complexity of the Directive itself and its planning process, the existence of numerous interdependent tasks, the initial short deadlines, the intervention of numerous administrations, institutions and the general public and the need to integrate several planning levels (European, national, regional, municipal, river basin, etc.), the implementation of the WFD represents a significant challenge for Member States.
- The recent Marine Strategy Framework Directive however has a degree of flexibility for its implementation that is not considered in the WFD. This flexibility is clearly a result of the problems in the implementation of the WFD. Problems like that which the Jucar River Basin is facing are a clear example of the ‘snake biting its tail’: Investments such as water desalination plants should comply with the River Basin Management Plan, which is under development and not yet approved; however there is an urgency from the EU to begin to apply these plans, when several criticalities are not yet solved due to economic factors.

In view of these elements, Regions suggest the deadlines for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive be reassessed with flexibility.