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## POSITION PAPER FROM THE CPMR AND ITS INTERMEDITERRANEAN AND BALKAN AND BLACK SEA COMMISSIONS ON:

The joint consultation document: *“Towards a new Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)”*, issued by the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Information about the submitting organisation:** Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and its Geographical Commissions “Intermediterranean” (IMC) and “Balkan & Black Sea” (BBSRC).

**Type of respondent:** network of public Regional Authorities (group of interest, think tank, platform for political and technical cooperation).

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### I. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) today represents more than 150 Regions from Europe and its neighbouring countries, including in particular some Regional Authorities from the Southern and Eastern Partnerships of the EU. The CPMR is both an interest group and a think tank for Europe, and works as a sound platform for political and technical cooperation on several core policies for the development of its Member Regions, such as: cohesion, accessibility and maritime policies. The CPMR is a unique network in Europe organised into Geographical Commissions (GCs) and it is capable of effectively addressing specific priorities and sectoral policies related to a given sea basin. In this framework, two of its six GCs are the Intermediterranean (IMC) and the Balkan and Black Sea (BBSRC) Commissions, which have specific action plans for the respective areas of influence and a specific interest and added value to give to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The CPMR and its IMC and BBSRC welcome the joint initiative by the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to launch a deep review of the ENP and:

- *Recall* the main messages of: the political position *“Turn Neighbourhood Policy into a genuine Cohesion Policy at the borders of the EU”*, approved by the CPMR General Assembly of Aarhus in September 2011 in response to the Communication of the EC and the High Representative of the EU: *“A new response to a changing neighbourhood”* published in May 2011. In particular, since 2008, the CPMR calls for a **genuine, partnership-based and long-term role for the Regional Authorities** in the framework of an overhauled policy to be restructured around an approach that takes on board the territories in their diversity and as contributors to development. This dimension of the ENP does not sufficiently appear either in the Commission’s documents that present this consultation, or in the draft Report of the European Parliament on the review of this policy (“Kukan Report”).
- *Underline* that on the one hand the context of the policy since 2011 has changed and evolved into an even more complex geopolitical situation at the borders of the EU, with several ongoing conflicts (e.g. in Libya, Syria and the Middle East, Ukraine etc.), the consequences of the Arab Spring, increasing threats to security (e.g. the rise of the Islamic State and terrorism), humanitarian crisis related to migration issues and in the framework of the long wave of the economic and financial crisis. Further reorientation and an update of the global strategy of the ENP is thus needed. In this regard, the first ideas and issues to tackle, in order to readjust the policy, that were proposed by the EC in its consultation in light of the complete review that

will be done by the end of 2015, are relevant and promising although, today more than ever, **there is a need to:**

- **Keep ensuring and improving the coordination of the ENP with other policies of the EU**, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Development Policy, Migration Policy and the new agenda for migration, but also with others such as Research & Development, Transport, Integrated Maritime Policy, Environment, Energy and Cohesion and all relevant EU financial instruments. This will ensure more effectiveness for the ENP itself as well as the neighbourhood dimension of the rest of EU policies and will boost the socio-economic development of the partner countries in a sustainable way, improving their assimilation of the EU *acquis*.
- Adopt a **balanced but differentiated approach concerning the Eastern and Southern components of the ENP**. Its objectives and resources shall be adapted accordingly with the different needs and ambitions of the partner countries and the EU itself with realism. A balance shall be found between the promotion of the democratic values of the EU and the stability of the EU's borders. Furthermore, the new ENP shall also take better consideration of the particularities and the situation of the neighbours of our neighbours, which also have a great influence in such relations and balance.
- **Increase the co-ownership of the Policy. This could be done in a multilevel governance perspective, associating much more Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs)<sup>1</sup> in the whole policy and the Civil Society (NGOs etc.) and through the implementation of a better communication on the field<sup>2</sup>**. In this regard, the EU shall go beyond the bilateral arrangements between the EU and its partner countries making room for key territorial players. A way to increase the co-ownership and the effectiveness of the policy at the same time could be **the extension and adaptation to the ENP of the concept, principles and methodology of the EU Cohesion Policy**. This would turn the ENP and its European Neighbourhood Instrument into an effective lever capable of dealing with true territorial needs.
- **Better consider, develop and use efficiently specific instruments as Macro-Regional (MRs) or Sea Basin strategies (SBs) and territorial cooperation**. The adaptation of the MRs and SBs shall be studied on the basis of the current EU experiences in the Danube, Atlantic, Baltic, and Adriatic-Ionian and adapted to the concerned areas in the east (Black Sea) and the Mediterranean. All cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes in the Southern and Eastern component of the ENP shall benefit from an increased share of the budget of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) in the future, in the framework of a global increased budget for the ENI adapted to the magnitude of ENP challenges. The ENP can bolster LRAs by focusing more on the development of concrete projects aimed at supporting sustainable development, social inclusion and local governance. CBC programmes, focusing on limited and clear priorities could enhance the thematic focus and help reach better outcomes and reducing the difficulties to reach more concrete results in the still very broad range of priorities set for the cooperation between the EU and its ENP partners. Moreover, simplification of procedures of CBC programmes shall be promoted as cross-fertilisation with other EU programmes, where the participation of the key territorial players of the partner countries shall be fostered (e.g. H2020, COSME, INTERREG, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Europe for citizens etc.).
- Foster **capacity building as a cross-sectoral goal of the ENP for empowering Local and Regional Authorities**. In this regard, the ENP should promote capacity building actions or projects oriented to the provision of good quality public services in key sectors for territorial development, encouraging decentralisation support functions and strengthening administrative simplification.
- *Requests* the **European Commission, the EU Council and the Parliament<sup>3</sup> to take note of these first recommendations and principles, and the following ones concerning the two components of the ENP**. Furthermore, the EC shall pay special attention to the opinions issued by the ARLEM, the CORLEAP, PLATFORMA and to that currently being drafted by the EU Committee of the Regions and CPMR (IMC-BBSRC Commissions) Members.
- *Advocate* - given the significant contribution of Regions to the success of Neighbourhood Policy - that a **flexible funding mechanism** should be introduced into the European Neighbourhood Instrument implementation arrangements, **aiming to encourage joint actions between Regional Authorities, Associations of Regions and other stakeholders** to this end.

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<sup>1</sup> Which are the closer Authorities to the citizens, being able to: spell out priorities and objectives, specify projects and mobilise the best stakeholders, be active players in the implementation of many programmes, help increase the visibility of the ENP and deliver its ownership by public opinion.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. the experience of "people to people" exchanges for the communication of results of the ENP at territorial level.

<sup>3</sup> Specially in the framework of the report on the ENP being drafted by the MEP Kukan

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENP REVIEW IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

In coherence with the messages of the previous general section, as with the “Final declaration” of the IMC General Assemblies of Barcelona 2013 and Venice in 2014, the following recommendations shall be considered concerning the Mediterranean:

- **Promote a sound “territorialisation” of the ENP, putting decentralisation at the core, and the application (and adaptation) of the partnership principle, the instruments and methodology of EU Cohesion Policy.** These recommendations (included in the 2014 ARLEM report on a “*Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean*”) are of high relevance in the current geopolitical situation, where the EU shall reinforce and **accompany the decentralisation processes** in the south and east of the basin<sup>4</sup> and **foster capacity building in territorial integrated development and democratic governance**. In this framework the following proposals shall be stressed:
  - **The action plans and the indicative plans under the bilateral component of the ENP shall better consider the role of the LRAs** in order to ensure a territorial distribution of the aid within the national plans. In the future and in the framework of an adaptation of the Cohesion Policy approach in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, the possibility can be studied to gradually empower LRAs in the partner countries as Managing Authorities of specific Operational Programmes.
  - The **application of the experiences already implemented in the eastern component of the ENP, which could be potentially successful in the Mediterranean** (such as the Regional Development Pilot Programmes or the “Comprehensive Institution Building”), shall be studied.
  - **The Local Administration Facility (LAF)** shall be extended in the Med Partner Countries as a means for increasing the competences and the efficiency of the LRAs.
  - **Twinning projects that more often involve LRAs** shall be incremented and take stock of the huge experience of LRAs for **institutional capacity building activities** and in particular of the Regions in the field of integrated territorial development and the provision of public quality services to the citizens. The activities of capacity building shall be increased in general also in the frame of specific cooperation projects.
  - **Territorial cooperation shall be boosted at financial and operational level and made more effective in the whole Mediterranean region.**
    - This should be achieved in particular with the key cross-border regions that actively participate, which are at the forefront and at EU level have in many cases (e.g. the Region with legislative powers) exclusive competencies in areas such as health care, social services or environment. In this regard, cross-border cooperation at sea basin level has a lot of potential in the framework of the ENP implementation, but the administrative procedures shall be simplified in order to allow a smoother participation of the southern Authorities.
    - Moreover, capitalisation and cross-fertilisation with other programmes shall be promoted. The synergies between the new ENP and Cohesion Policy should also boost the southern partners’ cooperation in INTERRG programmes such as INTERREG MED<sup>5</sup>. Joint partnerships and projects are the basis for networking among territories. In this framework the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGCT) shall also be promoted as a useful instrument in the Neighbourhood south, together with the principles for empowering LRAs - in a more autonomous way - with international cooperation responsibilities, which out of the EU, are often and still in the sphere of competence of the States.
    - EU cross-border Regions shall also have a major role in the conception and implementation of the ENP programmes in general because the capacity building of public authority at all levels and the cooperation at regional and sub-regional level are included in the objectives of the ENP. These regions shall be recognised and participate in the main managing bodies of the programmes and especially in the programming and monitoring committees<sup>6</sup>. The model of the “Territorial Committees”<sup>7</sup> of European cross-border cooperation (in the frame of INTERREG) could be transferred to the ENP programmes in order to ensure the defence of interest at local and regional level and the coherence of actions in the territory. On the one hand, ensuring a rotating participation of regional representatives as part of the national delegations in the programme structures could ensure a deeper involvement of Regions in the ENP and a sense of responsibility in projects

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<sup>4</sup> e.g. starting from Tunisia and Morocco where there is more potential in the short term.

<sup>5</sup> Respecting the limitations of the current regulatory framework.

<sup>6</sup> In small-scale programmes, bilateral or trilateral, all Regional Authorities shall be present in the decision-making bodies and especially the Regions which represent more than 50% of the eligible territory of one of the participating countries.

<sup>7</sup> In these Committees the LRAs in some cases can adopt decisions both concerning the management of the programme and the project selection.

implemented by stakeholders increasing the ownership. On the other hand reinforcing the programmes presence on the territory through local offices or antennas could warrant a clearer link between the programme's central structures and the local economic and social fabrics and project beneficiaries.

- The IMC also reaffirms the need to act at State level to ensure that all the countries of the ENP South can effectively participate in the new ENI CBC Med programme, which unfortunately is still not happening for different reasons.
- **The possibility to introduce and apply the macro-regional and sea basin approaches in the Mediterranean.** This recommendation is clearly included in the ARLEM report on a “Cohesion Policy for the Mediterranean” as in the “road map for macro-regional and sea basin strategies” of the CPMR IMC and its last political declarations. Moreover, it is stressed in the framework of the [Policy Paper of the Med Maritime Projects](#) drawn up in 2015, in the framework of the “MarInA-Med COM&CAP” project with a specific reference to the possible added values concerning a maritime integrated approach in the Mediterranean. This new approach could foster synergies among different key policies (including the ENP, the Cohesion Policy or the Integrated Maritime Policy, Energy, R&D, among others), normative<sup>8</sup> and financial instruments and key players, in order to better tackle common challenges at sea basin and sub-sea basin level. The strategies could lead to the capitalisation, identification and implementation of a set of core priorities and key actions, in a geometry variable perspective and also gradually including the south Med countries on a shared voluntary base. Three macro-regions could be set-up and implemented at sub-sea basin level: starting with the EUSAIR strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region - already ongoing - which could be a pilot for new emerging strategies as the EUSWEAST for the Western Mediterranean (that could start as a maritime strategy), the EUSEAST for the Oriental part of the basin and for a global integrated EUSMED strategy, in the long-term perspective. These strategies could also foster a balanced bottom-up and top-down and polycentric governance where the participation of the LRAs would be granted together with State level coordination, the collaboration of civil society, the academia and the promotion of public-private partnerships, in a global framework accompanied by the different DGs of the European Commission, the EEAS, the EP, the EESC, the CoR, the ARLEM and the UfM. Furthermore, these strategies shall entail and promote among the EU Council the vision of the importance to develop the vertical and strategic relation among Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa, thinking about a real and fostered socio-economic integration under an inclusive paradigm.
- **More complementarities shall be found between the ENI and different existing funding and financial instruments not only at EU level,** national and regional agencies for development, the BERD, the EIB, the WB, The African Bank for Development etc..
- **The urgency of integrating the link between the ENP with the CFSP and in a coherent way the global approach to migration, with a solidary attitude,** based on respect of human and asylum rights and on a sharing system of responsibilities. In this framework the campaign “We are all Mediterranean” launched by the CPMR and its Med Regions on [www.tousmediterraneens.org](http://www.tousmediterraneens.org) shall be supported and its principles considered for further actions to be launched. This is especially relevant for the Med, giving the recent commitment of the EU Council to reinforce internal solidarity and responsibility in order to stop the humanitarian tragedy in the sea basin. In this regard, the ENP shall also contribute to prevent illegal migration flows aiming at the socio-economic development of our neighbour partners. It is also important to note that, as a matter of fact, what the Mediterranean is living today in many territories is more about “co-habitation” than “neighbourhood”: there are many families which are spread all over the sea basin and therefore, any socio-economic or geopolitical event (war, crisis, famine, drought), has - in a way - a direct consequence in another place at a human and societal level. In this framework, the ENP shall also promote a better legal mobility as stated in the IMC political position on [“migration policy and the challenges of managing the mobility of people in the Mediterranean”](#)<sup>9</sup> released in 2014.
- **At multilateral level and in order to improve ENP coordination and effectiveness, the EU should cooperate more actively with other key stakeholders in the Region** such as the Arab League, the OSCE, the OIC, the G8, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the African Union.
- **The importance of fully exploiting the potential of the Union for the Mediterranean both in terms of political inclusive dialogue at Euro-Med level and concerning concrete projects.** Taking into account that the UfM constitutes the most advanced expression of multilateral politics in the Mediterranean, therefore it is paramount to increase the coordination and the synergies of the actions in the framework of the ENP avoiding duplication. In this regard, the IMC Regions welcome the results of the Ministerial Conference on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) held on 24 June in Beirut where the importance of the UfM was underlined together with “*the need for enhanced financing for the projects labelled within the UfM context*” and “to further strengthen the regional dimension as well as the principle of co-ownership

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<sup>8</sup> Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, Convention of Barcelona and Protocol ICZM, Marine Strategy Framework Directive etc.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. more tangible results from the Mobility Partnership agreements, work VISAs etc.

and to draw further on the synergies and complementarities in the region". The UfM can also help in the ownership of Euro-Med policy by public opinion in Arab countries, which is one of the main shortcomings of the ENP. Its new reinforced political dimension and inclusive work of the last period could be an added value for the central role that it must play in the new ENP.

- **The need to implement gradually and efficiently the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP) 2014-2020<sup>10</sup>** elaborated by the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, which constitutes a great step ahead and a real future integrated multimodal Euro-Mediterranean transport network.
- **The ENP should foster much more South-South cooperation**, possibly through specific thematic programmes and cross-border cooperation, exploiting the role of EU delegations in the partner countries and on key issues such as Environment, Security etc.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENP REVIEW IN THE BLACK SEA

In coherence with the messages of the previous general section, as with the previous declarations of the BBSRC, the following political messages shall be considered concerning the Eastern partnership and in particular the Black Sea area:

- The Regions of the Balkan and the Black Sea Regional Commission (BBSRC) wish to express their **infinite support to peace, reconciliation and development in the Balkan and Black Sea area**, which can only be secured through intensified collaboration at all levels. They support the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga, 21-22 May 2015, and express the will to contribute to further regional cooperation in the wider Balkan and Black Sea area.
- The CPMR was conceived to bring together the different population catchment areas surrounding the various European maritime basins. It fully supports the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy, which respectively promote the partner countries' rapprochement to the EU and the regional cooperation in the Black Sea area. Only by **fostering cooperation between the countries and the Regions of the Balkans and the Black Sea** will common problems be tackled and political and economic reform be encouraged.
- Nevertheless, the CPMR regrets the lack of progress achieved with the Black Sea Synergy, launched in Kiev in February 2008. The working document of 20 January 2015 from the Commission established a very disappointing state of play of this regional cooperation initiative. In parallel, even if it focuses essentially on security issues, the "Pascu Report" adopted on 11 June by the European Parliament rightly highlights that the **Black Sea Region should truly be a priority for the EU**, and considers that the **Black Sea Synergy is overwhelmed and calls for its review**.
- Being aware of the geopolitical difficulties experienced in this Region, the **CPMR calls for the development of the "neighbouring" aspect of the EU's inclusive policies in the Black Sea**. In this regard, the CPMR congratulates the Commission for its action determined **to result in a real Maritime Policy in the Black Sea**.
- **The CPMR invites the Commission to draw its inspiration from the agreement recently found with the concerned States which allows an extension of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) to the Western Balkans. A similar extension could be studied and initiated in the Black Sea Region**, by combining the CEF's, IPA's and ENI's interventions, taking into account the key role of Turkey that has the longest part of the Black Sea coast. The Motorways of the Sea also have to be developed in the Black Sea, by developing appropriate partnerships with the BSEC.
- **Other EU sectoral policies have to better involve neighbours**. The inventory drawn up in the working document of January 2015 is useful to establish the state of play – which appears to be disappointing - but also to specify the progress possibilities. The field of education is crucial; it is indicated that a feasibility pre-study was carried out in 2011 and that a feasibility study is under way.

In this context, the CPMR:

- **Calls for the relaunch of the Black Sea Strategy**, which requires the mobilisation of concerned Commissioners and of their services, in connection with the EU's diplomatic services (EEAS).
- Considering the lack of commitment from the States, which was identified in the Commission's document of January 2015, and the diversity of services implied within the EU and EEAS, *is concerned about* whether it would be appropriate to **identify a reference-person (e.g. "Black Sea coordinator") in charge of improving an integrated approach to these issues** (inspired on the profile of the Coordinators of the corridors related to the "Connecting Europe Facility").

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<sup>10</sup> In a framework of coordination between the UfM, the ENP and relevant key stakeholders.

- Asks for the **encouragement of the role of Local and Regional Authorities** in order to be more actively involved in the policy making process.
- *Suggests* – alongside the Black Sea Forum created in 2008 for the NGOs and without questioning the existence of the CORLEAP and its inclusive mission – **the creation of a Black Sea Regions Forum, as a key body for the development of “people to people” cooperation in the Black Sea.**
- *Asks for* **the continuation and strengthening of European support to the cross-border Cooperation Programme “Black Sea Basin”**. This is the main success of the EU in the Black Sea. This programme contributes to most of the objectives indicative above. It has to continue and its budget needs to be increased in the framework of the budgetary margin available throughout the duration of the current programming period.
- *Proposes* **the creation and development of a mechanism to support stability and capacity building**. This mechanism should benefit from partnership relations between Local and Regional Authorities and monitor capitalisation of the results of Cooperation Programmes and initiatives.