

DECLARATION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

We, local and regional elected representatives meeting in Barcelona, on 2 & 3 May 2010, for the 2nd Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean,

1. Welcome the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) approved during the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in July 2008 in Paris and hope that the next Summit to be held in Barcelona on 7 June 2010 will provide the necessary momentum to move forward with determination toward greater social and territorial cohesion between the different shores.
2. Note that the Union for the Mediterranean raises great hopes; it will be judged on the number of concrete actions implemented to strengthen cooperation at all levels—local, national and regional—in order to contribute to build peace and to improve the quality of life of citizens of the Mediterranean. We welcome the creation of UfM's General Secretariat in Barcelona, convinced it will be the engine that will enable us to make progress and get projects off the ground and that it will be capable of incorporating decentralized actors in these new dynamics, for the sake of reciprocity.
3. Expect from the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council a stronger Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the period 2014-2020. We are concerned, in spite of the launch of the UfM, that the Mediterranean may not longer be a priority in European policy. We call for the future neighbourhood policy to respect the balance established between the East and the South of Europe, both in terms of the degree of integration and financial partnership, and at the same time to propose to interested Mediterranean Partner Countries a reinforced partnership with the European Union. We wish to contribute to the elaboration of a new integrated strategy for the Mediterranean that may capitalize on the political initiative of the Union for the Mediterranean.
4. Draw attention to the fact that the economic crisis has had a profound impact on citizens, economic actors, and local and regional authorities of all countries forcing us to re-establish economic development, innovation and social cohesion as our leading priorities, recalling that these priorities are very much related to local markets and to the opportunities offered by Mediterranean territories. Local and regional authorities are ready to commit themselves, in partnership with the States and regional institutions, to the implementation of local and regional development plans.
5. Are convinced that the projects identified as priority sectors by the UfM (de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, alternative energies, higher education and research, development of small and medium-sized enterprises) offer many possibilities for the participation of local and regional authorities. Their involvement in the preliminary stages of the process—for example, in the field of water, local and regional authorities collaborate in the elaboration of the Mediterranean water strategy—is without doubt a guarantee, among others, to achieving expected results.
6. Declare our support to the creation of a project for sustainable urban development, a priority field of cooperation as stated in the declaration of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the UfM on 4 November 2008. Rapid growing cities, particularly in southern Mediterranean shores, concentrate a great number of the major challenges of the region: the competitiveness of the economic fabric, social inclusion policies for migrants, access to basic service needs and housing, management of land property and transport, and the degradation of the environment. We also recall that sustainable urban development and sustainable rural development are mutually dependent and wish the specific problems of rural territories will be taken into account.
7. Welcome the launch on 21 January 2010 in Barcelona of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA), having largely contributed to its development. This Assembly should be the framework for the institutional presence of local and regional governments in the development of the Union for the Mediterranean.
8. Call for the organization of conferences focused on decentralized cooperation and gathering European and Southern and Eastern countries, similar to the Forum of Local Authorities of the EU and Morocco held in Cordoba on 1-3 March 2010, and wish to participate in the organization of these conferences.
9. Ask the Co-Presidency, partner States and the Secretariat of the UfM to actively involve local and regional governments:

- in the preparation of the ministerial meeting on sustainable urban development (scheduled for November 2010);
 - as observers, in Euro-Mediterranean inter-ministerial meetings and in UfM meetings so as to be able to contribute actively and effectively in fields of direct interest to local and regional authorities;
 - in mechanisms for cooperation and mobilization of projects in partnership with the UfM, partner States and fund donors, as outlined in the field of water.
10. Are intent on playing our rightful role in negotiations for the future neighbourhood policy of the European Union, which will be the political and budgetary framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations for 2014-2020. We wish the future neighbourhood policy may enter into a new stage in favour of a convergence strategy that emphasizes—as close to the field as possible—programming local and regional actions in the same way as the European policy for economic, social and territorial cohesion. We eagerly hope for the strengthening of territorial cooperation tools:
- In the Euro-Mediterranean partnership as a whole, through the reinforcement of decentralized cooperation policies (following on programmes such as Non-State Actors and Local Authorities, CIUDAD, Euromed Heritage, etc.).
 - At Mediterranean basin level, through the concept of macro-region that should strengthen the cross-border cooperation programme by sea basin associating ERDF and ENPI funds. On this last point, we invite Mediterranean States to intensify consultations at the highest level in order to set up a global program that includes local and regional authorities right from start in the definition of priorities.
11. Ask the European Union and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries to include measures in support of national decentralization policies within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the neighbourhood policy, both in terms of content and in terms of budget. Social cohesion and development require good governance at all levels, which will also contribute to develop and to deeply establish local democracy in territories.
12. Shall continue to support the Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments, in charge of the organization of the Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean, as a focal point for consultation, dialogue and proposals of cities, regions and their networks actively involved in the Region. The Mediterranean Commission of United Cities and Local Governments is and will continue to be a reference and an effective interlocutor with structures and institutions working in the Mediterranean, particularly in support to EMRLA.
13. Decide to meet again for the third Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean to take stock on the progress made in achieving expected improvements.

We ask the Co-Presidents of the Union for the Mediterranean, as well as the Spanish Presidency of the European Union to convey the conclusions of the 2nd Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean to the Heads of State and Government and of EU institutions who will meet on 7 June 2010 for the UfM Summit in Barcelona.