



*Report of the meeting of the Euromed Group of EUROCITIES
Rome, 30 Nov. 1 Dec. 2004*

30 November 2004

Opening Session

The opening session was dedicated to official welcomes from the **Mayor of Rome**, the European Commission and the new presidency of the Euromed Group of EUROCITIES. **Commissioner Benita FERRERO-WALDNER** sent a message in which she looked forward to a stimulating discussion on a subject of such extreme importance as cooperation between the cities of the Mediterranean basin. **Sergio CHIAMPARINO, Mayor of Turin**, sent a message in which he emphasized the primary role of the Euromed Group: that the cities of Europe and those of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean communicate, via the instruments of cooperation, to attain new development prospects for the area. The Mayor of Turin also declared his commitment to maintaining an open dialogue with the European institutions. **Rinaldo BONTEMPI**, the Mayor of Turin's delegate for Mediterranean relations, emphasized the need for the Euromed Group to play a leading role in the debate over the new EU neighbourhood policy, which will be defined over the next two years and which can still be influenced. The Group must also work on fundamental objectives such as rights, citizenship, integration and cultural exchange. **Antoine GEBARA**, Mayor of Jdéidé and vice president of the Euromed Group, offered the commitment of the city of Jdéidé and suggested the creation of single secretariat for the Middle East. Mr Gebara emphasized the importance of the Group's forthcoming themed conferences. **Brigitte FERRARI**, from the city of Nice and Group vice president for Europe, proposed studying a more modern formula for obtaining finance, including private institutions such as foundations.

Session: "Promotion of sustainable development in the Mediterranean"

The session was dedicated to the presentation of results from the Med'act pilot-project "Culture and sustainable development" (Phase 1) and to illustrating the perspectives for Phase 2.

The Phase 1 presentations were:

- the project led by Bordeaux with partners Venice, Byblos and Tunis. Presentation given by **Sonia DUBOURG-LAVROFF** (Bordeaux). The project developed around four events (Bordeaux in the context of the NOVART festival, Venice with participation in the 9th *Salone del Patrimonio e dei Beni Culturali*, Byblos with the creation of a tourist reception centre and an arts and crafts centre, Tunis with a congress on theatre and its expression in the Euro-Mediterranean context.
- the project led by Rome with partners Brussels, Mahdia, Sfax and Bosra. Presentation given by **Franco LA TORRE** (Rome) and **Kasem KHALILI** (Bosra). A new system for collecting solid urban waste in the town of Mahdia, notably in the historic old town, has been introduced and an information point for citizens created. In Sfax a local *Agenda 21* process has been initiated, which corresponds with a process already begun by *Grande Sfax*, a consortium of

communes led by Sfax. At Bosra, city administration powers for refuse management have been reinforced through the South-South transfer of know-how from Mahdia to Bosra.

The Phase 2 presentations were:

- the project led by Barcelona with partners Rabat, Casablanca, Fès, Jdéidé, Thessaloniki and Strasbourg. Presentation given by **Joan PARPAL** (representing the city of Barcelona). The project concerns the modernization of libraries and aims at favouring an exchange of experience in order to promote a Mediterranean model of public libraries. In more detail, for Casablanca and Fès, this is a question of acquiring computer workstations with library management programs and relative training. There is also exchange between artists and intellectuals (writers, illustrators, painters), action to internationalize local folk festivals, and the opportunity of exchange between library users through the use of computers and workshops. The project's main achievement is the acquisition of management know-how in the libraries of Casablanca and Fès, the re-evaluation of the intellectual and cultural heritage of towns on both sides of the Mediterranean and the promotion of a cooperation policy.
- the project led by Genoa with partners Marseilles, Sidi Abdellah and Amioun. Presentation given by **Anna CASTELLANO** (Genoa), **Isma HAMIDI** (Sidi Abdellah), **Mervat EL HOZ** (Amioun). The project operates in the environmental context. Amioun, with the region of Kura, is conducting a feasibility study for the creation of a sustainable system for the collection and recycling of solid urban waste. There is no recycling system in Amioun and there is no legislation governing waste management in Lebanon. It is therefore necessary to study best practices which can be applied. For Sidi Abdellah, the project looks at the drawing up of strategic management plans for the environment, training and the exchange of best practices. The new town of Sidi Abdellah has been constructed with a view to fundamental values like sustainable development, economic development, research and technology, history and culture and efficient urban planning.

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Session: "New initiatives and fields of action for cooperation in the Mediterranean", Jean-Marc RIEGEL, Europeaïd Cooperation Office

Jean-Marc RIEGEL summarized the immediate and future prospects for funding in the Mediterranean area, focusing on the next two years (2005-2006), where the framework will remain the same as at present (the MEDA programme), and post-2007, when a different configuration will come on stream with the new European neighbourhood policy.

- With regard to the MEDA programme, there are two components, one regional, which represents 10% of the finance, and one bilateral, whose allocation of funds arrives from the External Relations Directorate General of the European Commission. It is important to remember that in this regional-bilateral MEDA framework, some countries have decided to provide support programmes for their municipalities. There exist other more thematic programmes regarding the environment, computerized society or heritage conservation (such as SMAP), which offer prospects to our cities. FEMIP, too, provides the municipalities with technical support services in order to produce the feasibility studies required by the European Investment Bank (EIB) for the creation of infrastructures. At present the regional MEDA programme foresees, for the 2005-2006 period, the provision of 5 million euros to sustain decentralized cooperation between local collectives but this funding is unlikely to increase and will depend on available resources. Regarding Med'act, there have been a number of internal discussions concerning the objectives and the operational modes of this programme. The idea is to work on themes rather than on sectors, institutionalizing this type of cooperation. An attempt will be made to define a framework for the programme that is relatively fluid in terms of the presentation of dossiers, the selection of funds and implementation. Two other important aspects are the transfer of experience not only from North to South but also from South to South, and the continuation of cooperation beyond the funding of the programme. In January 2005, a finance proposal will be

drawn up for April 2005 and we may be certain that, despite the restructuring process of the new Commission currently under way, the financing of this programme is assured and the next stage can therefore be launched from April 2005.

- Neighbourhood cooperation, which will be introduced in 2007, stems from the need to define new relationships with the countries beyond the frontiers of the new 25-member European Union. The new element is that the Commission has asked for an increase in financing for countries eligible for this type of cooperation, and has indicated new modes of cooperation. Twinning, for example, is a mechanism for reactivating and consolidating relations. Another type is trans-frontier cooperation, as an extension of the INTERREG programme.

Session: "Presentation of Action Plan 2005-2006, discussion and approval"

The session was dedicated to the presentation by the Presidency of the Euromed Group Action Plan 2005-2006 (enclosed) and discussion of this with contributions from **Catherine PARMENTIER** (CEO EUROCIITIES), **Franco LA TORRE** (Rome), **Pascal GEORGEON** (Brussels Capital Region), **Rachid JAMALY** (Mayor of Tripoli) **Gianluca SABA** (Genoa).

It was emphasized that, in the neighbourhood policy context, not only must the political representatives of European cities be listened to, but also the local authorities of other Mediterranean countries and the Mediterranean cities must offer their own issues directly for consideration. It was also pointed out that the cities of the South have cultural exchange and dialogue as their priority and that local cooperation functions if it is beneficial to both the countries of the south and east of the Mediterranean and to the European countries. Pascal GEORGEON gave the results of the 30 November workshop organized by Ecomed to discuss future projects and main themes of interest, from which three areas emerged: sustainable urban development and waste management, tourism and cultural heritage, strategic planning and urban renewal.

With regard to the Action Plan 2005-2006, **Catherine PARMENTIER** integrated her contribution into the more general context of the development of EUROCIITIES activities, with notably:

- 2005 operational priorities adopted at the General Assembly in Vienna, November 12, 2004. EUROCIITIES activities will develop in a series of six thematic Forums: social affairs; culture; economic development; environment; mobility; computerized society; and in work groups reporting directly to the Executive Committee in a transversal structure that handles cooperation and participation. Euromed is one of these groups and among the operational areas that most concern the Euromed group, there should be mentioned the new European Neighbourhood Policy (which will also be the subject of a specific EUROCIITIES work group) and the perspective of the general assembly in Lyon in November 2005 on the theme of the role of cities in the world.
- The new EUROCIITIES strategy for Communication and Information. A new "corporate image" was conceived around the EUROCIITIES logo adopted for the general assembly in Oporto. From 2005, only this logo will be used and it will provide the background for all of the network's communication tools. The new EUROCIITIES website will integrate all existing web pages into a single site.
- The adoption by all members of the new EUROCIITIES structures and procedures. Work groups will now be of a limited duration, with precise mandate and terms of finance approved annually by the Executive Committee. Members have also approved, for the towns and organizations not fulfilling the eligibility criteria to become a full EUROCIITIES member, the status of associated partner.

The session concluded with approval of the Action Plan with some modifications (see enclosed copy) and **Rinaldo BONTEMPI** (Turin) summed up some of the fundamental points adopted as priorities by the Group:

- The importance of the contribution that Euromed can make in elaborating the EUROCITIES position regarding the new European Union neighbourhood policy.
- The importance of the renewed emphasis on the role of the city in the Barcelona Process.
- The importance of stepping up the lobbying of EU institutions by Euromed in order to increase the level of funding dedicated to inter-city cooperation from funds destined for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.
- The importance of broadening the geographical representation of cities in the Euromed group, so that all Mediterranean countries can effectively be represented.
- The importance of Euromed's role in relations with civil society in the context of the Mediterranean dialogues which the Commission has decided to invest in via the constitution of a Foundation based in Alexandria in Egypt.

Round table: "Formation of networks for the promotion of sustainable development in the Mediterranean"

The session was dedicated to the opening of dialogue with other organizations, networks and associations that operate in the context of Euro-Mediterranean partnership, giving concrete indication of the interest that the Euromed Group has for others who have accumulated networking experience over the years. **Rinaldo BONTEMPI** (Turin) emphasized that Euromed, from its cities, must seek to construct a climate of peace and cooperation and, from this point of view, the active role of members of civil society is crucial. Bontempi also pointed out that in this framework contact with the experience of *Mediterranean Dialogues* and the *Anna Lindt Foundation* is important.

Contributing to the round table were:

- **Paqui SANTONJA MAYOR, Arc Latin.** *Arc Latin* (associated with Euromed) is a network, begun in 1999, of second-level local authorities in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Sixty-seven administrations are currently members. The objectives are no different from the other networks, but it offers a specifically extra-council vision of local administration. The network has six thematic groups: 1) citizen awareness, 2) the balance of territories and sustainable development, 3) economics and innovation, 4) culture, 5) the Mediterranean shoreline, 6) equal opportunities.
- **Carmelo MOTTA, COPPEM.** COPPEM came to Palermo in late 2000. It is not a city network: membership of COPPEM is via the national associations of the CCRE and the Arab cities organization, plus Israel and Turkey, with the number of delegates relative to the country's population. Cities, provinces and regions from 28 Euro-Mediterranean countries are today present in COPPEM. The strategic and political action of COPPEM is defined in the work of four consulting commissions: political and institutional; cooperation between cities and regions; economic and financial cooperation; culture, tourism and environment. The inspiration behind COPPEM policy is common to all autonomous local associations: to give a leading role to the cities, provinces and regions of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and turn around the logic of the declaration of Barcelona, which assigns local authorities a role that has turned out to be wholly marginal.
- **Joan PARPAL, MEDCITIES.** The MEDCITIES network (associated with Euromed) was created in 1991. It is composed of cities from almost all the European countries and is dedicated to the realization of sustainable urban development strategies. The fundamental objective is to facilitate the organization of the work of city administrations. The network develops cooperation projects between cities, receives funding and is responsible for the administration and coordination of the projects. The operational method is based around the participation of social agents in the conception, approval and realization of the strategy and in confronting the challenges.

- **Maria Paola AZZARIO CHIESA, *Forum delle Donne del Mediterraneo*.** The Forum was created in Valencia in 1992 as an initiative of the *Valencia Women's Institute*. Objectives are intercultural dialogue and the quest for peace-building activities. Themes that the Forum has concentrated on in particular are the relationship between women and science, the changes to society with the arrival of women in the world of work, the immigration question and the role of women in our cities. The Forum's operational method is to launch a specific theme every two years that rallies women from different countries around a particular, not just women's, problem; to promote, in each country and city, research and reflection on the local territory; to meet again after two years in a large congress where the outcome of the national and local research will be presented; to commit themselves with a final declaration and put into practice what has been illustrated by specific activities at the congress.
- **Umiliana GRIFONI, *Mete Comuni*.** The *Mete Comuni* network represents towns of small and medium dimensions in southern Italy. The objective of network members is to provide a structure that enables small towns, too, to participate in the discussion of Mediterranean affairs. The network places particular emphasis on the appreciation of cultural and natural heritage.
- **Béchir ODEIMI, representative of CGLU (*Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis*) in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.** The experience of the CGLU in the Middle East has demonstrated that achieving cooperation is not so easy. It is essential to have instruments and mechanisms, and to find facilitators who can explain to the mayors of Middle Eastern regions the importance of participating in networks and mayors' groups. This is the task that has been put into practice over the years in a region that is extremely able and dynamic.
- **Valeria RUSSO and Marcella ASCIONE, CAIMED (Centre for Administrative Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region).** CAIMED was established in May 2002 with a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Italian government's Department of Public Administration. Objective of CAIMED is administrative innovation, intended in a wide sense that embraces several thematic areas. Recently, research has also been conducted on the new proximity policy of the Mediterranean countries, directed at defining best practices for decentralized cooperation.
- **Michele CAPASSO, *Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo* of Naples, Euromedcity and Italian representative of *Fondazione per il dialogo tra le culture*.** As leader of the Italian network, antenna for Europe and coordinator of the 25 national networks of the European members of the EU's Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (Anna Lindt Foundation), the *Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo* of Naples is committed to the theme of dialogue between cultures in the Mediterranean. From studies elaborated in twelve universities, it has been established that 25% of Mediterranean dialogue takes place via scientific and technological research, with the rest notably concentrated in the large urban centres. These studies have highlighted how our cities represent the principal instrument for dialogue between cultures and for this reason the *Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo* together with the *Maison de la Méditerranée* constituted a network for inter-cultural dialogue which, in 2000 in Marseilles, created an association of 65 Mediterranean cities (EUROMEDCITY) working at the exchange of best practice.

Catherine PARMENTIER, who described the EUROCITIES activities, concluded the session by highlighting the need to adopt a position with regard to the financial apparatus accompanying the neighbourhood policy, elaborating it from inside Eurocities and working in synergy with other organizations such as CGLU, Medcities, etc. The time is right to agree on a common text to send to the responsible authorities and utilize it to implement high-profile events such as a seminar with the EU Commissioner for External Relations and a large-scale conference in Barcelona.

Conclusions

The meeting of the Euromed Group concluded with the official farewells of the Presidency and a reminder that the next meeting will take place in the Middle East in May 2005.