



Second plenary session
Agadir, 29 January 2011

ARLEM report on urban development in the Mediterranean

This ARLEM report was prepared by rapporteur Mr Khalid Al-Hnaifat, mayor of Greater Tafilah (Jordan). It was discussed by the members of the ARLEM's commission on Economic, Social and Territorial Affairs (ECOTER) on 2 July and 28 October 2010 and was adopted at the second ARLEM plenary session in Agadir (Morocco) on 29 January 2011.

BACKGROUND

Urban development is dealt with extensively in the Marseille declaration of foreign ministers of 4 November 2008.

The Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meeting of 25 June 2009 raised sustainable development issues, including urban development¹. The experts gathered at this meeting acknowledged the importance of initiating joint actions in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean to identify the key issues of sustainable urban development on a regional scale².

One of the suggestions was to create core groups to work on **setting the guidelines for sustainable urban development in Mediterranean cities**. Ministers welcomed a first call for concrete and operational projects that reflect priority areas and needs.

As a result, it was planned to hold a ministerial meeting on sustainable urban development towards the spring of 2011.

The main thrust of the future **Mediterranean urban strategy** is as follows:

- a charter on sustainable Mediterranean cities;
- spatial planning system for the Mediterranean region;
- a call for projects to develop model sustainable cities and neighbourhoods;
- agreement on common eligibility criteria for innovative urban projects by long-term donors and investors;
- establishment of a Mediterranean urban agency³.

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The first meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) took place on 21 January 2010. ARLEM was set up by the EU Committee of the Regions, local and regional authorities of the three shores of the Mediterranean and international and European associations representing local and regional bodies in the Euro-Mediterranean area in order to provide

¹ See" Background memo on the Union for the Mediterranean's urban development activities", informal document produced by the UfM, 2010

² See" Background memo on the Union for the Mediterranean's urban development activities", informal document produced by the UfM, 2010, page 1 ".support the processes of decision-making, administration and application of local policies, ensure social and territorial cohesion in towns; encourage the generation of economic opportunities, achievable through the intelligent and efficient management of resources in an integrated process that enhances the quality of habitat for Mediterranean citizens in urban centres that respect their cultural and natural heritage; promote sustainable Mediterranean architecture; encourage sound public service governance that fulfils the inhabitants' needs more efficiently; and lay the foundations for mobilising the financial resources necessary for the sustainable development of Mediterranean urban centres".

³ See" Background memo on the Union for the Mediterranean's urban development activities", informal document produced by the UfM, 2010.

the UfM with the crucial support of local and regional bodies when carrying out its projects and to give it a territorial dimension.

With this report on urban development, ARLEM aims to offer local and regional support to the **Mediterranean urban strategy, which includes:** a charter on sustainable Mediterranean cities; spatial planning system for the Mediterranean region; a call for projects to develop model sustainable cities and neighbourhoods and an agreement on common eligibility criteria for innovative urban projects by long-term donors and investors.

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INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean region is suffering from high population density, and problems arise as a result of the urbanization process in many areas, especially in those cities where the principles of sustainable development were not taken into account during the urban development phases. This is clearly shown through specific indicators such as higher consumption and waste of energy, high volumes of urban waste, increased traffic, high costs and congestion in addition to the potential loss of social cohesion in urban areas⁴.

It is expected that the growth rate will continue to rise in southern and eastern areas and at least one third will live in coastal urban areas. This will certainly exacerbate the problems of low levels of social cohesion, and the spread of poverty, expansion of construction on an illegal basis. It will also lead to high levels of air pollution, inadequate supply of clean water and poor waste management, and with the accumulation of all these factors, it will affect the health of these peoples.⁵

There are examples of cities on the three shores of the Mediterranean which indicate that when there is good governance, sustainable development is achieved. According to a report issued by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the "technical and financial capacity is limited (especially in small towns and medium-sized enterprises) and there is inadequacy of decentralised cooperation between the cities of the north and the south: this disproportion prevents effective cooperation on the promotion of sustainable urban development"⁶.

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4 See "Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development" United Nations Environmental Program UNEP and Mediterranean Action Plan MAP, P. 18: [http:// www.Planbleu.org/publications/s added_uk.pdf](http://www.Planbleu.org/publications/s added_uk.pdf)

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

THE ROLE, ACTIVITIES AND THE EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (LRAS) IN THE FIELD OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Local and regional authorities (LRAs) have a special interest in urban and regional development as they are informed and aware of the challenges arising from urbanization in terms of pollution, transport and waste management. LRA have gained experience in how to work in the areas of economic development, political and social, which contributes to building the capacity in urban development.

Local authorities have a significant role to play in urban development; they are capable of stimulating several views to work together and find a cooperative approach in order to achieve development objectives, and defining the concept of development and achievement by focusing on good governance and democracy.

Since local authorities in European countries have a long tradition in this area, it is recommended that they provide technical expertise and institutional support to their counterparts in the countries of southern and eastern Mediterranean⁷. There are examples of success in raising efficiency in the field of sustainable development and popular participation in the process of urbanization (e.g. the cooperation between the Municipality of Barcelona and the Municipality of Gaza on the New City draft, which was launched by the CIUDAD programme⁸, and which involved more than 40 local and regional authorities to assist in finding solutions to the planning problems for an attractive and vital city)⁹.

THREATS FACING THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

- **The rapid increase in urban population** is one of the challenges for urban development of the Mediterranean basin, where 7 % of the world's population is living in this region and they are on the rise, especially in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, which are undergoing demographic changes leading to a rapid increase in urban population, cities, and thus an

7 See examples of local and regional projects on sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean:

- Strengthen the management of solid waste on the basis of sustainability and integration in the North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) plus Regional Solid Waste Project (all countries SMAP II) Urban Solid Waste Management (Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan; Cyprus, SMAP I); GODEM (Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, CIUDAD)
- Promote the participation of women and youth in the process of local development (Lebanon, Morocco, and Italy)
- Partnership for the renewal of regional economic development (Lebanon and Jordan)
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (Alexandria, Egypt SMAP III)
- Urban Sustainable Development Strategies (Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria)
- The new city, which aims to move from a test town to a city with sustainability (Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and France)
- ART GOLD program in Lebanon
- ART GOLD program in Morocco.

8 The "Cooperation In Urban Development And Dialogue" (CIUDAD) programme aims to help local governments in the EU's neighbouring countries enhance their capacity to plan for sustainable, integrated and long-term urban development using good governance principles. This is done by capacity building and by promoting mutual understanding, exchange of experience and cooperation between local actors in the EU and in the EU's neighbouring countries in the implementation of common projects. By creating new partnerships and supporting existing ones (South-South, East-East and South-East partnerships) among local and regional authorities in this region the CIUDAD programme also hopes to achieve long-term benefits extending beyond the life of the programme. More information on the CIUDAD programme can be found on <http://www.ciudad-programme.eu/>.

9 Same Reference in addition Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development A framework for environment.

increase in illegal housing for them. Also tourism plays an important role in the pressure on urban development, especially when we know that it represents more than 15 % of income¹⁰.

- **Social progress** is not adequate in the region and has led to increased rates of unemployment and consequently to poverty, which means deprivation of a large number of people of clean drinking water and the lowest level of sanitation.
- **The impact of coastalisation**, crawling towards the coast, the concentration of population and economic activities on coastal areas and tourism urbanization added burden on the population growth in the southern and eastern regions of the countries of the Mediterranean basin. This situation did not change the situation in rural areas in the interior of these countries that opened up to the global economy¹¹.
- **Overpopulation:** this phenomenon of urbanization and crawling towards the coast is still continuing even now, especially in Turkey and other countries, as the flow of tourists to coastal areas is increasing, which has brought more problems during the process of urbanization¹², especially as indicated by the Blue Plan for the expectations of sustainable development¹³. This plan indicates this would increase the demand for irrigation and drainage, mosquito control, and transport network on a large scale.
- **Maintaining a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** is a challenge for local and regional authorities (LRAs), especially with regards to finding a quantity of clean drinking water, a sewage system, treatment of this water, and a safe way to dispose of household, medical and industrial waste.
- **The lack of a suitable transportation network** is another challenge for local and regional authorities¹⁴. Where noted, the increasing use of private cars or taxis, and this increases the environmental pollution in the cities so it is important to encourage the joint use of vehicles so that we reduce the impact of this problem on urbanization and sustainable development.

¹⁰ See "Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development "United Nations Environmental Program UNEP and Mediterranean Action Plan MAP".

¹¹ "Urban Sprawl in the Mediterranean Region" by Sophia Antipolis, Plan Bleu Regional Activity Center, March 2001.

¹² See UNEP Action Plan, Ninth Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee, Rome Italy-17 and 18 January 2005

¹³ See http://www.planbleu.org/publications/UPM_EN.pdf

¹⁴ See "Urban Sprawl in the Mediterranean Region" by Sophia Antipolis, Plan Bleu Regional Activity Center, March 2001, <http://www.planbleu.org/publications/urbsprawl.pdf>

**SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACING LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES IN THE FIELD
OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

The first challenge experienced by local and regional authorities is **the indiscriminate urban sprawl in coastal areas**, and its many negative effects which are well known in the Mediterranean region. It affects aquatic life and destroys arable land. Therefore it is a must to develop policies that maintain the vegetation and aquatic life in the Mediterranean countries.

The problem of haphazard and illegal construction poses a threat to security and health. Therefore, local and regional authorities have to take measures against urban sprawl by concentrating efforts on the sustainable development of the areas where urban migrants come from and by taking the necessary legislative and policy measures to foster their inclusion in those areas, inter alia by providing for the necessary health and social services and by generating growth and jobs.

Another challenge experienced by local and regional authorities (LRAs) is the **implementation of plans and programs for urban development in the Mediterranean**. Although these plans and programs were developed according to international standards, especially in the area of water, energy and waste management they often do not correspond to the resources and technical capacity available.

One more challenge is **the various legal proceedings and the differences in the volume of economic development between the countries of the south and east on one side and the north of the Mediterranean on the other**. For example, the problem of transportation that continues to plague cities of southern and eastern Mediterranean is if there is no effective transport network, which increases the use of private cars or other non-official taxis and minibuses, which in turn increases the problems of pollution and congestion. While the states north of the Mediterranean are thinking of re-urbanization, the countries of the south and east of the Mediterranean are still trying to find a way in the management of progressive urban growth.

**HOW LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OVERCOMING
CHALLENGES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Union for the Mediterranean should support cooperation between local and regional authorities in the field of urban development, decentralisation and development of the democratic process, and work on the strengthening of mechanisms for good governance and popular participation. This can be achieved through specific actions:

- Identifying the factors related to projects and activities, needs and solutions in the region's cities, specialised on decentralised survey activities, best practices and monitoring capabilities.
- Creating an information exchange mechanism – a "Stock Exchange" of best practice -, which could improve the networking between local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean region and take advantage of the existing expertise.

- Putting in place twinning programs between local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean that will develop urban development through the exchange of experiences and by building long-term partnerships.
- Promoting popular participation and decision-making and strengthening democratic development in local and regional authorities, so LRAs can apply this to participate in an effective manner, because the people are best placed to identify their needs and develop solutions.
- Better knowledge of all the existing programs, projects and funding available in the area of urban development and apply to them by presenting projects. There are, in fact, many ways to get funding for projects related to urban development, either through the private sector (funding of private foundations, etc..) or the public sector (international organisations, regional banks, the European Union, the European Investment Bank, the UNESCO and the Council of Europe etc)¹⁵.

Good governance is the basis for sustainable urban development, which means the exercise of powers in an atmosphere of transparency, openness and accountability, participation, effectiveness and coherence. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the Union for the Mediterranean:

- Works on promoting decentralization in the broad sense so that the individuals (staff) and financial matters are subject to accountability.
- Encourages partnership between the public and private sectors.
- Proposes actions to prevent fragmentation and promote policies in which there is interaction and cooperation between different sectors and whose purpose is to renew and revitalize cities.
- Works with local authorities on the mechanisms of family planning.
- Focuses on planning and development of medium-sized cities, especially those in inland areas of the Mediterranean countries, to control crawling towards the coast, inflation in the major cities and put an end to class differences in the cities.
- Helps local and regional authorities (LRAs) in reducing urban sprawl and the attack on arable land, as well as in encouragement to follow the ways of the communities, which would contribute to reducing household waste and encourage people to recycle.
- Maintains public health by reducing the emission of harmful gases by the use of private cars and encourage the use of environmentally friendly cars and renewable energy.

PROPOSALS FOR A STRATEGY ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A sustainable future for urban areas depends on policies at the local level, taking into account the long-term vision, strategic planning, strong leadership and popular participation. But because of the great challenges to sustainable development and the lack of support for local initiatives, any change will require cities and provinces or regions and states support, but not only external or decentralized support, but also the internal support. Therefore, any projects in the region should be aimed at:

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See Appendix I.

- Anticipating and planning for the potential urban growth
- Enhancing the value of the heritage of Mediterranean cities
- Improving the standard of living and reducing class differences
- Development of urban governance with the strengthening of solidarity for the cities of the Mediterranean.

POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainable development is a priority of the Union for the Mediterranean and its implementation will require the full involvement of local and regional authorities. Establishing responsibilities at regional or local level will ensure a degree of decentralisation and own human and financial resources, enabling local and regional authorities to play their role supporting the national and international players involved, in a multilevel governance spirit.

Convinced of the added value of the experience of local and regional authorities in the field of urban development, ARLEM:

- **Calls for a UfM Ministerial Meeting on urban development whereby all levels of governance involved may pave the way towards an integrated and common strategy for urban development in the Mediterranean region, which should empower local and regional authorities of all Countries with a transversal competence on promoting urban sustainable development and should provide sufficient human and financial resources to face this challenge.** LRAs are ready to play their role in building up consensus in order to focus on meeting the basic needs of the population in terms of urban governance, urban strategic development planning, housing, local economic development and impulsion of job opportunities, education and health services, transportation and the right of access to clean water, electricity and communications with the preservation of the environment;
- **Is willing to participate in joint actions in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean** to identify regional key issues related to sustainable urban development, support decision-making and administration processes, management and implementation of domestic policies, ensure social and regional cohesion in cities, inform new generations on economic opportunities and encourage sound public service governance to fulfil the inhabitants' needs in a more efficient way;
- **Reminds the UfM and the Member States** of the need to involve local and regional authorities in opening centres designed to promote cooperation between Mediterranean countries, and facilitate the exchange of experiences, through the strengthening of cooperation between local and regional authorities and other institutions working in the field of urban development;
- **Recalls the UfM and the Member States** about the importance to enhance the promotion of exchanges in the field of local economy, social services, environment, urban strategic

development planning, urbanism, architecture and civil engineering, local mobility, in order to promote the exchange best practices, in particular through universities' dialogue, with the support of the EMUNI;

- **Stresses the urgent need in participating in initiatives** for international cooperation through bilateral programs such as CIUDAD, ENPI/CBC, Euromed Heritage, and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Program. Through successful cooperation, such initiatives increase the role of local and regional authorities in developing sustainable urban projects as well as in helping to publicise such programs between citizens living in the southern Mediterranean countries;
- **Wishes to highlight** the need to create research and study centres of excellence such as the "Centre of the Mediterranean on Sustainable Development" to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information between the shores of the Mediterranean in order to develop a plan to meet the challenges of future urban developments. It is relevant to focus future work on the development of local and regional governance, urban health and social protection, and the prevention of natural disasters. In this context it is a must to point to the twenty year initiative of the Mediterranean countries, "Centre for Mediterranean Heritage" and the exchange of specialist expertise, knowledge and mechanism of action.
- **Reiterates that the issue of urban development in the MENA region will persist in the future** and therefore **emphasises that policies also have to focus on how to develop brownfield sites other than cities**. Local and regional authorities together with national governments have to be key actors in developing these sustainable urban policies.
- **Calls for the creation of an Urban Agency for the Mediterranean (UafM) dealing with urban development in the Mediterranean**, which should support the launch of sustainable urban development projects - politically, financially and in terms of know-how – and establish a network of the different players involved in urban development around the Mediterranean. ARLEM would support such an Agency and will strive to cooperate with it for cost-effective outcomes.
- To facilitate the exchange of best practice and provide a shared vision of problems and opportunities, **calls on the UfM to include the local and regional authorities at the earliest stage of political discussion** and to draw up a descriptive and updated list of current **national and sub-national legislation** on urban development issues, emphasising the legislation's main features, experiences of its application and future trends.
- Recalls the existing difficulties in interaction between Mediterranean states and reiterates that for a better dialogue it is important to extend the concept of multi-level governance to multi-level cooperation.
- Calls on the co-presidents of ARLEM to forward this report to the Heads of State or Government of the Union for the Mediterranean, the secretary-general of the UfM and its bodies, the President of the European Council and the presidents of the European institutions and bodies.

Appendix I: CASE STUDY: the Great Sfax Development Strategy (GSDS)¹⁶

Sfax, second largest town of Tunisia, is a case of success story in the use of a City Strategic Development methodology as an action-oriented process developed through participation to promote equitable and sustainable growth to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the town and surrounding municipalities.

The GSDS lasted from October 2002 to April 2005. Through an important participatory process (more than 5000 persons, many local and national institutions as NGOs, university, entrepreneurs' organisations, ministries...) were defined the vision of the future of Great Sfax, the strategic lines to advance to it, 15th structuring projects and 37 accompanying actions. As following tools were created a Development Observatory and a set of 72 indicators were defined.

From them GSDS has been applied through several projects as the "South Coast Integrated Management" to promote the structuring projects of this area and the "Sfax Development Strategy Phase II" (ongoing) to impulse other strategic lines on inter-municipality, public transport, popular neighbourhood renewal, Medina development, economic competitiveness and youth occupation. Several Mediterranean towns and international institutions have supported those projects as Barcelona, Marseilles, and Rome municipalities, Medcities network, European Commission, Cities Alliance, PNUD, World Bank, AFD, GTZ and WWF.

Several concrete results of this strategic process have been: (i) The decision of Tunisian Presidency to delocalise an big phosphate industry which was a barrier for the south coast development, (ii) the inclusion in the Tunisia 11th Plan framework of 8 structuring projects and accompanying actions and 6 other finally included to be financed, (iii) the launch of the Sfax public transport feasibility study by EIB and (iv) the Medina's Local Agenda 21 recently finalised.

Nevertheless, the main result, in addition to those concrete results, is that Sfax and its surrounding municipalities have nowadays the capacity to manage their medium and long term future definition and promotion, in collaboration with their local and national agents and in cooperation with other municipalities and international institutions.

¹⁶ MEDCITIES network experience.