

**First Ministerial Conference of
the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on sustainable urban development
Strasbourg, November 10th, 2011**

The Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean in charge of sustainable urban development met in Strasbourg, on November 10th 2011 and adopted the following declaration:

Taking note of:

- the Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development adopted in November 2005, in Portoroz, which highlights the role of urban development in the Euro-Mediterranean area;
- the Marseille statement adopted by UfM Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held on November 4th, 2008;
- the outcomes of the UfM Ministerial meeting on sustainable development projects held in Paris on June 25th, 2009, especially the Urban Development workshop calling for:
 - common orientations defined within a guidance framework for sustainable Mediterranean cities;
 - the launching of a call for projects to select operational, relevant urban sustainable projects, either in promoting outstanding projects of investment or in making available tools fostering urban engineering and capacity building and training;
- the recommendations stated in the reports “Territorial dimension of the UfM – recommendations for the future” and “Urban development in the Mediterranean”, presented during the plenary of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) of January 28th and 29th, 2011, in Agadir, more specifically the recommendation stating the necessity to associate local authorities to the design and implementation of inclusive territorial policies;
- the Barcelona Convention on marine environment protection in the Mediterranean of February 16th, 1976, as amended in 1995, and its protocols;
- the preparatory meeting in Rabat, Morocco, September 12th & 13th, 2011;

We, the Ministers,

Fully aware

- of the importance to implement a balanced and sustainable planning and development of cities and regions, meeting demographic issues as well as the requirements of social solidarity and economic performance, respectful of heritage and concerned about the preservation of environment and cultural diversity, declare ourselves ready to enhance and facilitate the emergence of a sustainable development approach in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- of the necessity to act in accordance with national policies and regulations and with the approval of the competent authorities;

1. Aware of the interplay between urban and territorial development, climate change and the environment, call on each UfM Member to define, when this is not the case, a national strategy of sustainable urban development in close coordination with local and regional authorities enabling cohesion between socio-economic and environmental aspects, and initiate a dialogue at the regional and local level in order to increase commitment for local strategies and capital investment planning, reflecting priorities and impacts on sustainable development;
2. Promote the setting up of frameworks of urban development based on the specificities and contexts of the respective countries, favoring the spatial and urban planning of all territories, that includes, when appropriate, urban renewal, limitation of urban sprawl, ensuring the long term existence of urban areas, incorporating all the components of sustainable development, associating the residents to the decisions and providing them equity in access to all the basic services, leaving no urban area aside;
3. Call on each UfM Member, according to its national strategies, plans and policies, to promote an integrated approach within the urban policy:
 - 3-1 by integrating the urban dimension within the wider regional contexts, e.g. as a part of functional areas including interplay of rural and urban areas;
 - 3-2 by facilitating social and territorial cohesion and developing the role of engines of growth and hubs of creativity of urban areas, thus contributing to boosting up territorial competitiveness, innovation, and enhancing human capital resources;
 - 3-3 by working towards urban planning and improving energy efficiency in transport and habitat, in a sustainable and affordable way. This could be achieved, among other things, through an increase in the use of renewable energy, in line with the dynamic given by the Mediterranean Solar Plan, a flagship UfM initiative.
 - 3-4 by better anticipating possible effects of climate change, such as desertification and coastal erosion, and taking necessary adaptation measures in urban development and renewal;
 - 3-5 by working to meet the challenges of a generalized access to water and sanitation;
 - 3-6 by developing urban mobility plans favouring collective and soft modes of transport and encouraging modal shifts;
4. Highlight the essential role of architecture, landscape and urban planning to promote urban quality and the quality of life of the inhabitants;
5. Call on authorities of each UfM Member to establish safe and well-built settlements and to take action in order to reduce informal settlements and to ensure mitigation of natural disaster and settlement risks, taking adaptation measures to reduce the effects of major natural or technical disasters in urban development and renewal;
6. Being aware that such a policy may in some UfM Members entail a regionalization of national public action, a more decentralized process and a reinforcement of integrated and sustainable urban approaches;
7. Recall the necessary involvement of all the stakeholders on a given territory - the State's local and regional authorities, the private sector, the civil society, the wider public - to develop and implement public policies of sustainable urban and spatial development;

8. Call on authorities of each UfM Member to rely more on the local and regional authorities for the preparation, adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and integrated sustainable urban and spatial development strategy;
9. Point to the fact that islands, being areas with specific features, require targeted actions and support in order to develop in a sustainable manner;
10. Commit ourselves, within our competences, to foster the development of a national multi-level governance liable to meet the challenges that the Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions are facing at national, regional and local level, while respecting their specificities;
11. Acknowledge the need to promote synergies with donors and operators;
12. Note that, given the investments required, new financial approaches should be considered to supplement and make more efficient public financing, and deem necessary to encourage a greater involvement of the private sector as well as a better sharing and coordination of the various existing investments;
13. Welcome the work undertaken in this respect by the European Investment Bank, the World Bank and the AFD to define common criteria to assess projects submitted for funding and call for an increasing synergy between donors; as well as the importance of the Global Environment Fund in that field;
14. Underline that cooperation in this matter within the Union for the Mediterranean is one of the main channels to meet the different challenges;
15. Call for the use of existing networks, and when necessary for the development of new ones, to exchange experiences and knowledge at the local, regional, national, and where appropriate, crossborder level, as well as within technical, academic and professional organizations, in accordance with national policies and rules;
16. Call upon local authorities from the European Union to get involved in decentralized cooperation for the benefit of local authorities of non EU members of the UfM, with the approval of the competent authorities;
17. Underline the need to design tools such as statistics and indicators enabling reliable benchmarking, and call for mobilizing in this regard the required donors' financial resources and technical assistance for building the national capacities especially in the Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries to develop and maintain such tools, according to public data availability, both at national and local levels, and on a case by case basis;
18. Support the implementation of integrated projects in sustainable urban and spatial development within the Union for the Mediterranean and encourage all urban and territorial stakeholders, after consultations with the concerned authorities in each UfM country, to submit to the Secretariat of the UfM proposals and projects in compliance with the priorities of the Union for the Mediterranean that favor sustainable urban development;

19. Call for the elaboration of a Euro-Mediterranean sustainable urban strategy, respecting the specific pace of economic social and environmental development of each state that could be based on the following preparatory work, to be formulated by the concerned Senior Official Experts with the support of the Secretariat of the UfM:

- A Guidance framework for sustainable Euro-Mediterranean cities and territories :
 - enabling a shared perspective in urban and territorial strategies;
 - specifying the principles and core values of a balanced sustainable urban development that respects people and the environment;
 - offering a basis for discussion for the authorities implementing sustainable development initiatives;
- A call to donors to favour the emergence of sustainable urban development projects likely to be labeled by the Union for the Mediterranean;
- A preliminary study to determine if the creation of a coherent mechanism, such as an Urban Agency for the Mediterranean, is needed to support sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean, taking into consideration importance of networking, existing systems, structures and institutions, and the principle of voluntary contributions;
- An award for urban innovations to identify and promote best practices;

20. The follow-up and the agenda of the above mentioned agreed preparatory work in the field of Euro-Mediterranean sustainable urban development will be done through the Senior Officials Expert meetings, that will draw up an outcome document on progress achieved, with the support of the UfM Secretariat, to be submitted to the next Ministerial Conference.